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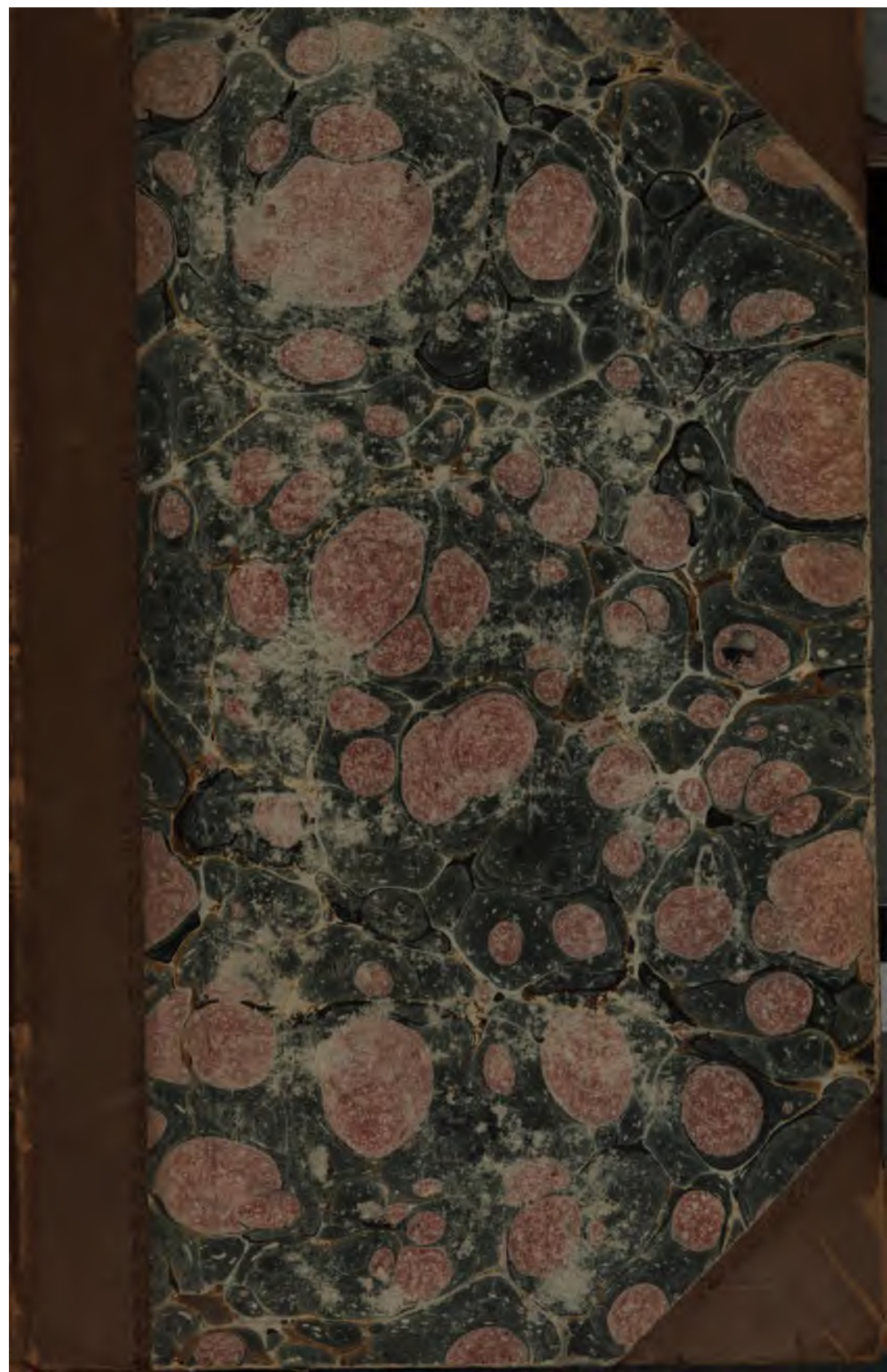
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AN

**EXAMINATION**

OF

**THE HUMAN MIND.**



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EDINBURGH  
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*T. 1824*  
**AN EXAMINATION**

**OF**

**THE HUMAN MIND:**

**BY**

**THE REV. JOHN BALLANTYNE.**

**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; AND  
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON,**

**MDCCCXXVIII.**

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE design of the following Work, which is complete within itself, is to give a view of the General Principles of the Mind of Man, accompanied with a brief illustration of their nature, mutual relations, and more important tendencies. Should these speculations be favourably received, it is not improbable that they may be succeeded by others, having for their object, the application of the doctrines here stated to the explanation of the more interesting Intellectual, Active, and Moral Phenomena of Human Nature.*





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## INTRODUCTION.

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It is almost a common-place maxim in philosophy, that we should begin with ascertaining particular facts before we proceed to establish general principles, and, in reference to *matter*, there cannot be a doubt that this maxim is well founded ; but in reference to *mind*, it is much less important than many seem to imagine. The facts pertaining to mind already ascertained, and ascertained with all the evidence that any reasonable person can desire, are innumerable. They are presented to our consciousness in myriads every hour, and are more troublesome, indeed, by their number and variety, than by any other circumstance with which they are attended. It is not so much particular facts that we need to investigate in the study of the mind, as the general laws by which they are regulated.



In this opinion I am aware that I differ from the generality of modern authors. Mr Stewart, in different parts of his writings, speaks slightly of the exposition of general principles, and strongly urges the propriety of chiefly directing our attention to particular phenomena. "With what feelings of contempt," says he, in his Preliminary Dissertation to his Philosophical Essays, quoting from M. De Gerando, "would the physiologists of former times have looked down on the chemists of the present age, whose timid and circumscribed system admits nearly forty different *principles* in the composition of bodies ! What a subject of ridicule would the new nomenclature have afforded to an alchemist ! The philosophy of the mind has its alchemists also."

Stewart here seems totally to overlook the essential difference between mind and matter. Many of the most important facts in the philosophy of the latter were for a long time unknown, and many important ones are, no doubt, unknown still ; but this is by no means the case, at least to the same extent, in the philosophy of the former. An indefinite multitude of facts in the science of mind are already practically known to all ; and the great object, therefore, is not to discover them, but to trace them to the principles on which they depend.

There are no doubt facts of a different nature per-

taining to mind ; but to the discovery of these the *previous* discovery of general principles is almost indispensable. Stewart indeed speaks as if *every kind* of fact must be discovered before we venture to generalize. "It is necessary," says he, in his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, "to ascertain facts before we begin to reason, and to avoid generalizing, *in any instance*, till we completely secure the ground that we have gained. Such caution, which is necessary in all the Sciences, is, in a more particular manner, necessary here, where the very facts from which all our inferences must be drawn, are to be ascertained only by the most patient attention ; and, where almost all of them are, to a great degree, disguised ; partly by the inaccuracies of popular language, and partly by the mistaken theories of philosophers."

That many of the facts in the Science of Mind are disguised by the inaccuracies and theories which Stewart refers to, every person will allow ; but how is it possible to avoid such sources of error but by resorting to the general principles which lay open to us the truth ? The most patient and scrupulous attention to the facts themselves is an expedient in a great measure useless, nor does Stewart in his own practice pay much regard to it. He states, for instance, as one fact, that ideas of *space* and *time* are connected in the mind by means of *Association* ; as another fact,



that the *Sensations* which are excited by external objects, and the *perceptions* of material qualities which follow these sensations, are also connected by *Association*; as a third fact, that the regard which is paid to unlucky days, to unlucky colours, and to the influence of the planets, is to be ascribed to *Association*. But how does he proceed in establishing these facts? By the patient and cautious exercise of attention directed immediately to the facts themselves? No, truly; but by first illustrating the general principle of Association, and then showing how naturally and exactly the facts fall under it. No person of common judgment would ever think of establishing them in a different way.

*The more general principles* of the Mind do not seem to be involved in much mystery. They are to be found among all our ordinary feelings and convictions, and in ascertaining them we have not so much to make *discoveries*, as, from the variety of principles practically discovered by nature, to *select* those of most powerful and extensive influence. An eloquent and ingenious writer has compared the labours of the Metaphysician to those of the Grammarian, who arranges into technical order the words of a language which is spoken familiarly by all his readers, and to those of the Geographer, who exhibits to them a correct map of a district, with every part of which they were pre-

viously acquainted. The comparison, I imagine, contains much truth, and had contained still more, if, instead of referring to the *grammarian* and *geographer*, it had referred to the *political Economist*, whose general principles, though difficult in their applications, are nevertheless in themselves so evident as to be known and acted on by the most illiterate and uninformed. At any rate, the philosopher of mind, in proposing *the more general principles* of his Science, has nothing to do with facts to which mankind are entire strangers. He appeals to common experience for the truth of his doctrines, and the ignorance of mankind respecting them would decisively prove his doctrines to be erroneous.

By far the greatest difficulty in the study of the mind, is to discover *the influence of general principles on particular phenomena*; and here the temptations to error are so numerous, and of a nature so seductive, that the utmost circumspection is hardly adequate to surmount them. The following are a few of the principal errors into which philosophers are apt to be betrayed, in this department of their labours.

1. Drawing conclusions which their principles do not warrant. Hume, for instance, tells us that the mind, with all its activity, can never go beyond its own operations, and that therefore we neither have, nor can have, any reason to believe in the existence



of things outward,—to believe the existence of an external world, for example. But here is manifestly a conclusion which his principles do not warrant. Though the mind never go beyond its own operations, we may have abundant reason to believe in the existence of things outward ; for this belief itself is an operation of the mind, and we may have just as good reason to perform *it* as to perform any other.

2. Declining to draw conclusions which their principles do warrant. Dr Reid tells us, that Consciousness is the immediate knowledge which we have of our present thoughts and purposes, and, in general, of all the present operations of our minds. But, not content with this most indubitable statement, he every where represents Consciousness as a *distinct* principle,—as much so, indeed, as Sensation or Association. But this is certainly a most mistaken representation. The knowledge which the mind has of its present operations, is obviously included in the operations themselves, and implies no distinct principle whatever. How is it possible, for example, for the mind to feel an excruciating pain, without *knowing* that it feels it ; to remember a past event, without *knowing* that it remembers it ; or to experience an affection, without *knowing* that it experiences it ? The very nature of pain, of remembrance, of affection, and of all other *present mental operations*, implies their being known.

Their *existence*, and our *knowledge* of their existence, are not two different things, but one and the same thing viewed under two different aspects.

Another error of the same kind is to be found in Stewart's account of *Conception*. "By Conception," Mr Stewart says he means "that power of the mind which enables it to form a notion of an absent object of perception, or of a sensation which it has formerly felt." But such notions are manifestly derived from *Association*, and require no other principle. Stewart himself, under the head of *Association*, tells us, "that one thought is often suggested to the mind by another; and that the sight of an external object often recalls former occurrences, and revives former feelings, are facts which are perfectly familiar, even to those who are least disposed to speculate concerning the principles of their nature. In passing along a road which we have formerly travelled in the company of a friend, the particulars of the conversation in which we were then engaged are frequently suggested by the objects we meet with. In such a scene, we recollect that a particular subject was started; and in passing the different houses, and plantations, and rivers, the arguments we were discussing when we last saw them recur spontaneously to the memory. The connexion which is formed in the mind between the words of a language and the ideas they denote; the connexion



which is formed between the different words of a discourse we have committed to memory ; the connexion between the different notes of a piece of music in the mind of the musician, are all obvious instances of the same general law of our nature." Our obtaining " a notion of an absent object of perception, or of a sensation which we formerly felt," are no less obvious instances of Association. If, in passing along a road, which we have formerly travelled in the company of a friend, association suggests the particulars of the conversation in which we were engaged, must it not also suggest a notion of the absent objects of perception to which our conversation referred, and a notion of the words or *sensations* of sound which our conversation involved ? How is it possible to have recalled to our thoughts the particulars of a former conversation, without having recalled at least some of the *words* or *sensations* which were employed on the occasion ? Or what is it that association does recall, if it do not recall these things ?

It may be said, I know, that the error of unduly multiplying principles is an error on the safe side, and merits some indulgence. But why should error on any side claim indulgence ? The great object of all philosophy is to ascertain the general principles of nature, and explain by their assistance the different phenomena which nature exhibits, and the more ge-

neral the principles, *provided they be just*, the more completely is the object of philosophy obtained. Had Newton confined his attention to the cautious enumeration of subordinate facts, instead of obeying that adventurous spirit of true genius by which he was actuated, could he ever have acquired the tenth part of the admiration which all at present are so eager to award him? Rash and inconsiderate generalizations are certainly undeserving of respect; but let none bestow praise on those who run into the opposite extreme, and bewilder themselves and others among an indefinite mass of ill-assorted particulars.

Nor should the philosopher of mind be afraid to push his principles to circumstances the most minute and evanescent. If true, they will apply to things trifling as well as to things momentous, and their application to the former is often as instructive as their application to the latter. In reality, it is their applying to things of the most contrasted characters that presents the laws of nature in their most interesting aspects. If the law of gravitation excites our astonishment by its prodigious power, our astonishment is tenfold increased when we think of its marvellous tenuity—of its not only ruling the planets in their orbits, but the falling to the ground of a straw or a pebble. In the operations of mind, there are laws whose effects are no less contrasted. The law of Association has no



small influence in regulating us in the most sublime and important duties in which we can engage, and it has also influence in regulating us in judging of the shape of a hat, the cut of a coat, or the make of a pair of shoes.

Even when his principles would lead to conclusions considerably remote from the ordinary opinions of mankind, the philosopher of mind must not be afraid to follow them. A fondness for paradoxes is certainly to be avoided, but he must not be startled though he meet them occasionally. The laws of nature often lead to results that seem very extraordinary, and which some may regard as absolutely incredible; but, when satisfied of their truth, we are not to abandon them. They may lead us into mysteries, but they will also lead us through them, and oftentimes surprise us with a strange and regular simplicity, where at first we could see nothing but complexity and disorder. The not going *far enough* with our principles is frequently as unfavourable to the exposition of phenomena as the going *too far*. Intrepidity in thinking is almost as requisite to the metaphysician as caution.

3. Another error into which philosophers very frequently fall, is mistaking the nature of the facts to which their conclusions refer. The abettors of the selfish system in morals contend, that all the actions of mankind have an ultimate view to their own individual

advantage ; that the parent, in toiling for his offspring, is only toiling for himself ; that the patriot in struggling for the liberties of his country, and the warrior in dying in its defence, are equally ungenerous ; and, in fact, that no human being, whether brave or timorous, benignant or churlish, compassionate or unfeeling, religious or profane, is ever actuated by any real regard to the welfare of others. To make out this strange system, the more ingenious of its abettors allege, that the parent toils for his children, because their welfare is *gratifying* to certain principles of his nature, and thus gives him pleasure ; that the patriot, the warrior, the bountiful, the compassionate, and the devout, have also certain principles of nature to be *gratified*, from which they derive pleasure, and that this pleasure, though it results from doing good to others, is as much their *own*,—is as much the exclusive property of *self*, as the enjoyment of food or raiment, or any other object of which no human being but *self* can share. Here, however, the main fact of the case is altogether overlooked. To act from a regard to *self*, is not merely to gratify some natural principle, and thus obtain pleasure ; it is to act *with a view* to the pleasure, and consequently to propose the pleasure as the end of our acting. But can any one look to human beings and say, that they always act thus ? Has the distracted mother, who rushes on



certain destruction to save the life of her infant, nothing in view but the pleasure she herself is to obtain from witnessing its deliverance? Is it not perfectly manifest that she never thinks of *self* at all, and that her whole object is to rescue her beloved charge?

Another example of mistaking the nature of facts, may be given from the strictures of Dr Reid on the tenets of the Nominalists and Realists. In attempting to refute certain errors of these ingenious speculators, Dr Reid tells us, that every conception has some *object* to which it refers,—that he who conceives must conceive something,—and, of course, that every conception must be a conception of something. But here is unquestionably a mistake concerning fact. We can form a conception of a centaur, of a tree with golden leaves, of a horse with five heads, &c.; but such conceptions have manifestly no object whatever to which they refer. They are *phenomena of mind*, and nothing else. Dr Reid, indeed, maintains, that in these cases the conceptions have *objects*, but that the objects are things *which have no real existence*. But this is not only to mistake fact, but to advocate a direct contradiction. A thing which has no real existence is nothing at all, and can neither be the object of a conception, nor of any thing else. No truth, surely, can be more evident, than that that which has no

being is *nothing*? and to talk of *nothing* as standing in the relation of an object to our conceptions, is certainly a strange way of explaining phenomena. It is precisely similar to the mode of philosophizing adopted by some ancient writers, who laboured to point out the different qualities inherent in a *nonentity*. In reality, it assumes the very principle on which these speculators proceeded.

Dr Reid has plainly been misled by the following argument, which has often imposed on philosophers: "We can conceive," it has been said, "a triangle which does *not exist*, and demonstrate from it the properties of those which *do exist*. But what is this *conceived triangle*? It is surely something different from an *idea* in our own mind. We do not speak of equilateral, isosceles, or scalene ideas, nor of right-angled, acute-angled, or obtuse-angled ideas: And if these attributes do not belong to ideas, it follows necessarily that the *conceived triangle* is not an idea. It must, therefore, be the *object* of an idea, and an object which does not exist." I shall afterwards have occasion to point out the fallacy of this very specious argument. It is enough to remark at present, that the doctrine which Reid means to establish is so evidently contradictory and ridiculous, that no argument whatever could establish it. If we are not warranted to conclude, that a thing which has *no existence* is *nothing whatever*,



and, consequently, can be the object of nothing whatever, all belief, and judgment, and reasoning, are at an end, and every conclusion which the human mind can form is utterly nugatory.

4. Another error into which philosophers are apt to fall, is the taking *for granted* the facts which their reasoning is designed *to prove*. The elementary truths pertaining to the mind are so exceedingly minute, and so much intermingled, that an inquirer is extremely liable to pass insensibly from one to another, and ultimately to come forward with results which his reasoning is totally inadequate to support. The most profound metaphysicians have often been betrayed into errors of this kind. Dr Adam Smith, for example, attempts to prove, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, that all our moral ideas and feelings spring from *sympathy*; and yet, in every step of his inquiry, he assumes the existence of the very sentiments which he is labouring to evince. "When the original passions," says he, "of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last just and proper, and suitable to their objects; and, on the contrary, when, upon bringing the case home to himself, he finds that they do not coincide with what he feels, they necessarily appear to him unjust and improper, and unsuitable to the causes which excite them. To

approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely *sympathize* with them; and not to approve of them as such, is the same thing as to observe, that we do not entirely sympathize with them."

Now, here it is obvious to remark, that if the original passions of the person principally concerned do not involve moral sentiments, the sympathetic emotions of the spectator cannot involve them either. Whether we regard sympathy as our entering into the views and feelings of another, or, with Smith, as "our changing places in fancy" with another, and conceiving ourselves to be affected by what *he* feels, yet it certainly cannot give us sentiments which he does *not* feel, and which we do not conceive him to feel. A ready communication of sentiments between different minds undoubtedly discovers a beautiful correspondence between them, but no such communication can ever give rise to a sentiment that is altogether new. The transmission and retransmission may be as often repeated, and may comprehend as many particulars, as we please; but still it can convey nothing but what is in the original mind. Neither mind nor matter can transmit or communicate what it has not to itself; Dr Smith, with all his acuteness, has manifestly taken for granted, that the person with whom we sympathize is en-

dowed with the very sentiments which by means of sympathy he thinks he has accounted for. The same mistake pervades his account of what he calls *merit* and *demerit*, as distinguished from moral propriety and impropriety,— a distinction, by the way, which seems to be a most unphilosophical one.

“ He appears to deserve reward,” says he, “ who, to some person, or persons, is the natural object of a gratitude which every human heart is disposed to beat time to, and thereby applaud. And he, on the other hand, appears to deserve punishment, who, in the same manner, is, to some person or persons, the natural object of a resentment, which the breast of every reasonable man is ready to adopt and sympathize with. To us, surely, that action must appear to deserve reward, which every body who knows of it would wish to reward, and therefore delights to see rewarded. And that action must surely appear to deserve punishment which every body who knows of it is angry with, and upon that account rejoices to see punished.”

Here we have precisely the same error in reasoning as before. That action must unquestionably appear to deserve reward, which every body who knows of it would wish to reward, *provided* their wishes involve the conviction of the action's being morally good. And that action must appear to deserve punishment, which every body who hears it is angry with, and on that



account rejoices to see punished, *provided* their anger and rejoicing involve the conviction of the action's being morally evil. But if these convictions be not involved,—the very convictions which Smith is attempting to account for,—the actions can appear to deserve nothing, for they are not things to which moral desert can at all be applied.

It is not easy to mention any expedients of a positive kind, that can much assist us in expounding the phenomena of mind. Attention to the following particulars, however, may perhaps be of some use.

1. We should carefully remark the *combined influence* of different principles. In almost every mental operation, there are more principles concerned than one, and if we do not therefore attend to their joint influence, we may labour for ever in explaining phenomena, and yet labour to no purpose. The phenomena of perception, for example, are usually explained by referring them to impressions on the organs of sense. But how can impressions on sense afford ideas of objects *as external*? How can they afford ideas of the *magnitude* of objects? Or, how can they afford ideas of their *different directions*? It is said, I know, that after we have obtained an idea of our own body, we can easily discover, by its means, the situation and magnitude and direction of other bodies. But in what way is the discovery effected? Suppose

that I have obtained an idea of the exact length of my hand, yet how can I obtain by it an idea of what is perhaps fifty or an hundred times longer? The successively applying my hand to the different parts of the object is evidently not enough. My doing so would only give me fifty or an hundred ideas *in succession*, but no idea of the entire length of the object. To obtain this last idea some other principle than *sense* must be brought into operation,—a principle which can *retain* and *combine* into *one whole* the individual ideas which *sense successively* furnishes. This principle, as I shall afterwards show, is *Association*; a principle which, in conjunction with *sense*, enables us to explain the phenomena with great readiness.

2. We should carefully remark the combined influence of different circumstances *comprehended under the same principle*. A considerable number of phenomena may be explained in this way. It is well known, for instance, that the oftener we go over any train of ideas, the more readily does the first of the train, when it afterwards occurs, suggest the second, the second the third, the third the fourth, and so on to the end of the train. The influence of *repetition* presents some of the most interesting phenomena in mental science, and, so far as I know, they have never been satisfactorily accounted for. They may be ac-

counted for, I imagine, with great ease, by merely attending to the different circumstances comprehended under the principle of association.

It is uniformly found that an idea, by *preceding* another, acquires some degree of power to suggest it, and this power must remain for some time, else it could not be said to be *acquired*. If it precede the other a second time, it must acquire another degree of power, and this added to the former must double it, a third time must triple it, and so on. And hence the oftener we go over any set of ideas in a particular order, we should be able to go over them again the more readily in the same order.

The case is exceedingly analogous to certain results presented by the law of gravitation. A body, by falling one second of time, acquires a certain velocity; by falling another second, the velocity is doubled; a third second triples it, and so on. This accelerated velocity, as natural philosophers well know, is not to be imputed to any distinct law of matter, but is merely a consequence of the law of gravitation. The increasing power of an idea to suggest others, by repeatedly preceding them, is with as little reason to be imputed to a distinct law of mind, but is merely a consequence of the law of association.

3. But the laws of nature not only make things act *in conjunction*; they not unfrequently make them act



*in opposition*; and it is necessary, therefore, to attend to their *conflicting* as well as to their *co-operating* influence. When we witness the *ascent* of smoke, we would not conclude that smoke possesses a principle of *levity* which makes it mount upwards. The true doctrine, we well know, is, that smoke possesses *gravity* as well as other bodies, but that its gravity is *counteracted* by that of the atmosphere. In the science of mind, the influence of *counteracting circumstances* is also to be attended to. While listening to a public speaker, should an uproar arise among the persons around us, and prevent us from hearing him, we would not conclude that the speaker had lost his voice, or that his voice had lost its power. The true account evidently is, that both remain as before, but that their power is counteracted by the superior influence opposed to it. Even the common people would explain the case in this way, and tell us that the voice of the speaker was overpowered by our more noisy companions,—that it was drowned by their superior clamour, and prevented from reaching us. While engaged in repeating a poem which we have perfectly committed to memory, should an object of terror present itself to our view, it is ten to one that all thoughts of the poem instantaneously vanish, and that an entirely different set of thoughts and feelings take possession of our mind. Is the force of memory in this

case destroyed, or even impaired? No, unquestionably: But a counteracting force of superior power has come into operation, and the influence of memory is overcome. A mere child would give this explanation, and tell us that it was unable to go over its task, not because it had committed it imperfectly to memory, but because it was *interrupted* by the terrifying object which it witnessed. The conflicting influence of opposing causes will often enable us to explain phenomena, which would otherwise be utterly unaccountable.

4. *Specific examples* should as frequently as possible be brought forward. By this expedient, the philosophers of matter are enabled in most cases to conduct their investigations with great distinctness and accuracy, and the philosopher of mind has every motive to resort to the same expedient. His subject, though abounding in facts, is amazingly difficult, and requires every aid which prudence can suggest. Any progress that has hitherto been made in the philosophy of the mind, has been effected in this way, and its future progress can be advanced in no other.

It is a mode of proceeding, however, that is very unfavourable to those loose and rambling speculations which some seem so fond of; and it will never suit those who cannot submit to accurate thinking. But these inconveniences are not to be regarded. The



study of the mind should either be conducted with precision, or abandoned altogether. Discussions on such a subject that have no determinate object, are utterly useless, and can only serve to amuse the idle and the frivolous.

To persons of reflection, a rigorous mode of investigation is far from wanting its attractions. If it do not afford them a number of brilliant and fanciful pictures, it does what they more highly value,—It presents to them things in their true colours and proportions, and enables them to establish conclusions that will bear examination. The Science of Chemistry, when vague and illusive, afforded amusement to not a few votaries; but who that has a particle of philosophical genius, would prefer such amusement to the substantial truth and sublime interest resulting from the labours of modern accuracy?

With regard to the influence of language—an influence which philosophers are continually lamenting,—there are two errors to be particularly guarded against,—*The first* is, regarding those things as *one* which are expressed by *one term*; the *second*, the regarding those things as *more than one*, which are expressed by *more than one term*.

The *first error* is well exposed by Dr Brown, in his Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect. Dr Reid has somewhere remarked, in opposition to

Hume's theory of Causation, that if a cause be nothing but an invariable antecedent, then *night* must be the cause of day, and day the cause of night. But, as Brown justly observes, *day* and *night* are not words expressive of particular objects, or particular events, but of portions of time which comprehend many different objects and events. Reid's argument, therefore, is worth nothing, and derives its whole plausibility from the source now mentioned—Our being apt to consider things as *one*, merely because they are expressed by *one word*.

The *second error*—the regarding those things as *more than one*, which are expressed by *more than one word*, is equally to be avoided. Dr Reid will also furnish an example of this blunder. The *conception* which we form of a sensation, according to Dr Reid, is something distinct from the sensation itself, and implies the exercise of a distinct faculty. He every where represents *conception*, or *simple apprehension*, as a separate power of the mind, and tells us that “we cannot *feel pain* without *conceiving* it, though we may *conceive* it without *feeling* it.” “In every operation of the mind,” he farther says, “in every thing we call thought, there must be *conception*. When we analyse the various operations, either of the understanding or of the will, we shall always find this at the bottom, like the *caput mortuum* of the chemists, or



the *materia prima* of the peripatetics; but though there is no operation of mind without conception, yet it may be found naked, and detached from all others, and then it is called simple apprehension, or the bare conception of a thing."

But this is not all. Dr Reid also represents *consciousness* as a distinct power of the mind, and maintains that it is by it we have the knowledge of all our present mental operations. "To perceive," says he, "to remember, to be *conscious*, and to *conceive* or *imagine*, are words common to philosophers, and to the vulgar. They signify *different operations* of the mind, which are distinguished in all languages, and by all men that think."

According to Dr Reid, then, although we *feel the most excruciating pain*, yet we can have no *conception* of the pain without the additional faculty of *conception*, nor any *knowledge* of the pain without the still additional faculty of *consciousness*. But I appeal to every person of common judgment, if it be not a contradiction in terms, to suppose that we may *feel pain* without *conceiving* it, and being *conscious* of it. The very existence of the pain manifestly involves conception and consciousness. In fact, the feeling or sensation of pain, the conception of pain, and the consciousness of pain, are evidently nothing but different modes of expressing the same thing viewed under dif-

ferent aspects. The pain is styled *a sensation*, when viewed as originating from sense ; it is styled *a conception*, when viewed without reference to our belief or disbelief of its existence ; and it is styled *a matter of consciousness*, when viewed as something which from its nature is known. To assert the operation of *three* distinct principles in such a case is very ridiculous. Were a person to hear his house styled sometimes *an edifice*, sometimes *a dwelling*, and sometimes *a castle*, he might just as well assert that he had three different houses, because each of the words has a different meaning.

As to the language to be employed in *explaining* the phenomena of mind to others, the chief things to be attended to are *simplicity* and *precision*. Vague general statements, which *involve* the truth, but do not *describe* it, are in a great measure useless. They are to be heard every day from the lips of the most illiterate, but are incapable of conducting us to any definite conclusion. They do not so much discover the truth as tell us whereabouts to search for it. A precise view of things, divested of every extraneous circumstance, is one of the main duties which mental philosophy has to perform, and, easy at first sight though it seems, it is one of the most difficult.

When metaphorical language is employed, Mr Stewart recommends that it should be considerably



varied, that the defects of different metaphors may balance one another, and the inconveniencies that result from the exclusive use of a single one be avoided. This counsel is so far judicious. But still it should be remembered that metaphors are very ill fitted for expounding metaphysical phenomena. If they do not lead into error, it is all that we can expect from them, for they never can give a precise view of the truth. We might as well attempt to demonstrate Euclid's Elements by metaphors, as to unfold by them the nature of a mental operation.

I need hardly remark, that in the following Speculations I have adhered as closely to the preceding maxims of Philosophizing as was in my power, and that if in any case I have deviated from them, it has been from inadvertence and not from design. I have divided my Lucubrations into *Four Parts*,—*The First* embracing a view of the more general principles of the mind; *the Second*, the application of those principles to various *Intellectual phenomena*; *the Third*, their application to various *Active phenomena*; and *the Fourth*, their application to various *Moral phenomena*. This division has subjected me to the necessity of a few repetitions, but I trust they will not be found more numerous than the circumstances demand. I have judged it prudent to publish only the *First Part*

at present, till I see how my Speculations are likely to be received.

I may also take the liberty to state, that my researches have been prosecuted for the sake of amusement, and not in the discharge of any professional duty. I am not extensively acquainted with metaphysical writings, and may therefore have mentioned some doctrines as my own which are to be found in the works of my predecessors. If I have done so, the only apology I can plead is ignorance. I have studied to deal candidly with the sentiments of others ; but it is by no means easy for writers on the subject of mind to avoid appropriating to themselves what really may belong to those who have gone before them.

I shall only farther state, that an account of all the leading principles of my Work was drawn up, and put into the hands of some of my friends, before I had any opportunity of knowing the opinions of Dr Brown ; and that since I have perused his writings, I have seen no reason to alter my sentiments, except in one or two trifling particulars. The system of Dr Brown certainly discovers great ingenuity, and is expounded with great eloquence ; but it appears to me to betray a want of that persevering diligence and scrupulous caution, without which metaphysical inquiries are in a great measure unavailing. I may add, that it is a

system of the *most rigid necessity*, as much so as that of any *fatalist* either of ancient or modern times, and is liable to all the objections which every modification of *futality* must inevitably encounter.

## CHAP. I.

### SENSITIVE PRINCIPLE.\*

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#### SECT. I.

#### *Ideas of Extension.*

MANY of the ideas of the mind are originally suggested by impressions on the organs of the body. Some philosophers contend, that they are all originally suggested in this way, but though the prevailing opinion is different, yet every one allows that the body is the origin of a great number of ideas.

The organs of the body which suggest ideas are styled *senses*, and are the five following: the sense of Smell, of Taste, of Hearing, of Sight, and of Touch. The ideas suggested by the sense of Smell are our various sensations of smell; those suggested by Taste are our various sensations of taste; Hearing suggests sensations of sound; Sight, sensations of colour; and Touch, sensations of heat, cold, and *touch*. When

\* It is usual for Physiologists to style the influence possessed by the body to produce feelings or ideas in the mind the *Sensitive Principle*.



an object makes an impression on the sense of touch, besides the ideas of heat or of cold which it occasionally suggests, there is always another, which I beg leave to call the sensation or idea of *touch*. It is frequently difficult to distinguish this idea from others with which it is connected, but it may be rendered perceptible by a little attention. On some occasions any one may distinguish it. When an object makes a violent impression on the organ of Touch, a very disagreeable feeling is immediately experienced, which is merely the sensation of touch, excited to a degree that is painful.

But, besides the sensations or ideas now mentioned, there is another suggested by impressions on the body, of much more importance than any of them—the *idea of extension*. This idea is involved in all our conceptions of matter, and demands the utmost attention from all who would examine the phenomena of mind.

Dr Reid contends that the idea of extension is not suggested by impressions on the body, but by the sensations which result from these impressions. “*Extension*,” says he, in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, “seems to be a quality suggested to us by the very same sensations, which suggest the other qualities above mentioned.” (He had been speaking of hardness and other sensible qualities.) “When I grasp a ball in my hand, I perceive it at once hard, figured, and extended. The feeling is very simple, and has not the least resemblance to any quality of body; yet it suggests to us three primary qualities, perfectly distinct from one another, as well as from

the sensation which indicates them. When I move my hand along the table, the feeling is so simple, that I find it difficult to distinguish it into things of different natures, and yet it immediately suggests hardness, smoothness, extension, and motion,—things of very different natures, and all of them as distinctly understood, as the feeling which suggests them.”

The opinion that our *sensations* or *feelings* suggest ideas of extension, appears to me very improbable. Our ideas of extension always correspond, not to the nature of the sensations, but to the dimensions of the impressions on our senses—a presumption, at least of their being suggested by these impressions. But the main argument is, that the sensations and ideas of extension, as far as can be ascertained, are suggested *at the very same instant*. When I grasp a ball in my hand, I obtain a sensation and an idea of extension, but I cannot perceive the minutest interval between them. They seem both to occur to my mind *at the very same moment*. Why then should I impute the former to the impression on my hand, and not the latter? To the best of my judgment, they are perfectly simultaneous, and with the same reason I might ascribe the sensation to the idea of extension, as the idea of extension to the sensation. The fact clearly is, that they are both suggested by the impression on my hand.

In a subsequent passage, Dr Reid observes, “that the sensation of touch,” (meaning all the sensations excited by impressions on the organ of touching,) “are so connected by our constitution, with the notion of extension, figure, and motion, that philosophers



have mistaken the one for the other, and never have been able to discern that they are not only distinct things, but altogether unlike." Who the philosophers are whom Reid here refers to I do not know. Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Locke, three very eminent philosophers, were as well aware of the distinction as Dr Reid himself. With regard to Locke in particular, his well-known division of the qualities of bodies into *primary* and *secondary*,—a division with which Des Cartes and Malebranche were also well acquainted,—is entirely founded on this distinction. His primary qualities are nothing else but those which suggest ideas of extension, and other related ideas, while his secondary qualities are those which suggest what are usually called sensations.

The real state of the matter is plainly this. The philosophers now mentioned conceived that our bodily senses give rise, not only to certain *feelings*, but also to ideas of extension, and other related ideas, and therefore they frequently give the name of sensations to the whole group; whereas, Dr Reid conceives that our bodily senses give rise to nothing but certain *feelings*, and that it is those feelings which give rise to ideas of extension, and, therefore, he limits the word sensation entirely to the feelings. In all this, however, there is nothing like confusion, but merely a variety in the application of a term arising from opinions that are at once distinct and intelligible. Dr Reid, notwithstanding his high talents, discovers, throughout his whole writings, a strange propensity to magnify the difference between himself and his predecessors.

Dr Brown, in endeavouring to explain the origin of our ideas of extension, remarks as follows: "The hand is the great organ of touch. It is composed of various articulations, that are easily movable, so as to adapt it readily to changes of shape, in accommodation to the shape of the bodies which it grasps. If we *shut* our hand *gradually*, or *open* it *gradually*, we find *a certain series* of feelings, varying with each degree of opening or closing, and giving the notion of *succession* of a certain length. In like manner, if we gradually extend our *arms*, in various directions, or bring them near to us again, we find, that each degree of the motion is accompanied with a feeling that is distinct, so as to render us completely conscious of the progression. The gradual closing of the hand, therefore, must necessarily give a succession of feelings,—a succession which, of itself, might, or rather *must*, furnish the notion of length, in the manner before stated, the length being different, according to the degree of the closing,—and the gradual stretching out of the arm gives a succession of feelings, which, in like manner, must furnish the notion of length,—the length being different, according to the degree of the stretching out of the arm."

There cannot be a doubt that the operations here mentioned will give rise to the notion of length of *duration*, or rather of feelings as occurring in different points of duration, and, of course, as occurring in succession; but unless length of *duration* be the same thing with length of *extension*, they can evidently give us no manner of notion of this latter species of length at all.



The next part of the process Dr Brown states thus. "In these circumstances of acquired knowledge, after the series of muscular feelings, in the voluntary closing of the hand, has become so familiar, that the whole series is anticipated and expected, as soon as the motion has begun,—when a ball, or any other substance, is placed for the first time in the infant's hand, he feels that he can no longer perform the usual contraction,—or, in other words, since he does not fancy that he has muscles which are contracted, he feels that the usual series of sensations does not follow his will to renew it;—he knows *how much* of the accustomed succession is still *remaining*; and the notion of *this particular length*, which was expected, and interrupted by a new sensation, is thus associated with the *particular tactual feeling* excited by the pressure of the ball,—the greater or less magnitude of the ball preventing a greater or less portion of the series of feelings in the accustomed contraction. By the frequent repetition of this *tactual feeling*, as associated *with that feeling, which attends a certain progress of contraction*, the two feelings at last flow together, as in the acquired perceptions of vision; and, when the process has been repeated with various bodies innumerable times, it becomes, at last, as impossible to separate the mere *tactual feelings*, from the *feeling of length*, as to separate the whiteness of a *sphere* in vision, from the convexity of the sphere, which the eye of itself would have been for ever incapable of perceiving."

Every person will admit, that it may become impossible to separate the mere tactual feeling from the feeling of length,—understanding by the word length,

*length of duration* ; but what concern this has with *extension*, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. There are no doubt many analogies between duration and extension; but to assume that they are literally one and the same thing, as Dr Brown most evidently does, is one of the most unwarrantable assumptions that ever was hazarded. His mode of accounting for our knowledge of *superficial extension*, is, if possible, still more wonderful.

“ When a body,” says he, “ is placed in the infant’s hand, and its little fingers are bent by it as before, sometimes *one* finger only is impeded in its progress, sometimes *two*, sometimes three ; and he thus adds to the notion of mere length, which would have been the same, whatever number of fingers had been impeded, the notion of a certain number of proximate and co-existing lengths, which is the very notion of breadth.” I am not sure if I rightly understand this; but the meaning *seems* to be, that our notion of a plain superficies, is merely the concurrence of different series of successive feelings. As to our knowledge of extension *in three dimensions*, Dr Brown says little or nothing.

It is unnecessary to attempt any refutation of these most singular opinions. The very foundation on which they rest is untenable ; for that foundation is, that *duration* and *extension* are substantially one and the same thing ; and that a *cubical foot*, or a *cubical yard*, is not essentially different from an *hour*, or a *day*,—both being composed of the same ingredients.

Would we only attend to the simple facts of the case, the manner in which our ideas of extension are



suggested, might be stated, I imagine, without difficulty. They seem evidently to be suggested according to the following law. *Every impression on a sensitive part of the body suggests a sensation ; and in connexion with it an idea of a portion of extension corresponding to the extent of the impression.\**

Let it be observed, however, that in stating this as the law which regulates the suggestion of ideas of extension, I am far from meaning to assert that it is an ultimate principle, beyond which our researches are not to be carried. We are not warranted to assert this of any known law whatever, whether of mind or of matter. Even the law of gravitation, one of the most general of all laws, may, for any thing we know, be resolved into some other still more general. All that I venture to state is, that ideas of extension are, *in point of fact*, suggested according to the law now mentioned ; and that as no attempt to account for their suggestion on a more simple principle has succeeded, we are bound, *in the present state of our knowledge*, to regard this as an ultimate law. I have reflected again and again on the explanation offered by Dr Brown, and with every disposition in my power to judge impartially ; but the only impression it has left on my mind is amazement that a person of his eminent talents should have hazarded an explanation

\* The law may be stated otherwise, thus :—*Every impression on a sensitive part of the body suggests a sensation ; and, in connexion with it, an idea of a portion of extension corresponding to the portion of nervous expansion affected.* It is always the extremities of the nerves that are affected by impressions on our sensitive organs, at least in the first instance.

so very extraordinary. Were it not for the gravity he every where maintains, I should certainly be induced to believe that his design was to turn the whole subject into ridicule.

The law which I have mentioned, and which may be styled *The Law of Correspondence*, is manifestly applicable to *the sense of Touch*; for, whatever be the form or magnitude of an impression on this organ, we uniformly experience *a sensation and an idea of a portion of extension* of a corresponding form and magnitude. An impression of one dimension, suggests a sensation and an idea of one dimension. An impression of two dimensions, suggests a sensation and an idea of two dimensions. An impression of three dimensions, such as an impression on the whole external surface of the hand, suggests a sensation and an idea of three dimensions. When the impression is circular, we obtain a sensation and an idea of a circle. When the impression is square, we obtain a sensation and an idea of a square. When the impression is of small extent, we obtain a sensation and an idea of a small extent. When the impression is of large extent, we obtain a sensation and an idea of a large extent. In short, let the impression be varied as it may, we always experience a sensation and a corresponding variety in the form and magnitude of the impression of which we obtain the idea.\*

\* The doctrine, that our sensations may have a seeming extension, is directly or indirectly admitted by every one, even by those who profess to disavow it. "When a coloured body," says Dr Reid, "is presented to us, there is a certain apparition to the eye, which we have called the *appearance* of colour. Mr Locke calls it



As the above law, too, would lead us to expect, the sensation and the idea of extension always seem blended with each other, and of the same apparent dimensions. When any part of the body is pained, we feel as if the pain were *diffused* over the part affected, and of the same *extent* with it. When any part is affected with cold, we feel in the same way,—as if the cold

an idea, and indeed it may be called so with the greatest propriety. This idea can have no existence but when it is perceived. It is a kind of thought, and can only be the act of a thinking being." But does not this *appearance* or *sensation* of colour, which Dr Reid admits to be a kind of thought, *seem* to be extended? Can any one witness an *appearance* of colour, which has no *apparent dimensions*? Stewart asserts that the sensation of colour appears to the mind to be "*something spread over the surface of bodies.*" But is it possible for any thing to appear to be *spread over the surface of bodies*, that has no *seeming extension*? Dr Brown says, that he "cannot separate the colour"—meaning the sensation of colour—from the *length* and *breadth* of the trunk of a large oak before him. And in this assertion he necessarily admits the *apparent* extension of the sensation of colour. Both Stewart, indeed, and Brown contend, that the seeming extension of colour in the cases they refer to, is not the result of sensation, but of association; but that affects not in the slightest degree the general doctrine itself. The truth is, every system of philosophy, ancient and modern, till the time of Dr Reid, was ready to acknowledge that our sensations have frequently a *seeming extension*. And Dr Reid and his followers, as we have seen, do the same whenever they are thrown off their guard. I may add, that the common people continually make use of language which implies the *seeming extension* of sensations. They speak, for example, of the whole of such a part of their bodies *feeling pain, feeling hot, or feeling cold*,—language which necessarily implies that the *sensation of pain, of heat, or of cold*, seems to be diffused or extended over the part they refer to.\*

\* See Note D.

were *diffused* over the part,—or, what amounts to the same thing, as if the part felt the sensation of cold: And so in all other cases.\*

Dr Brown remarks, “That with our present complete belief of external things, and especially of our organs of sense, the most important of these, the origin of our knowledge of extension seems to be a matter of very easy explanation. The *square surface* presses on our *organ of touch*,—it affects not a single physical point merely, but a portion of the organ, corresponding exactly, in surface, with itself; and the perception of the similar square, it will be said, thus immediately arises.” And in a subsequent lecture he remarks, “I next proceeded to consider the other class of supposed tangible qualities, which includes the various modifications of *extension*, and urged many arguments to show, in like manner, that, however indissolubly these may seem *at present* to be connected with the simple feelings of our organs of touch, it is not to our simple original feelings of sense, that we owe our knowledge of them as qualities of things without.”

In these passages, Dr Brown admits every thing I plead for as necessary to establish the law of correspondence,—at least in as far as *touch* is concerned. For if there *be at present* such a connexion as he speaks of, it is manifest we must regard this connexion as *original*, till its origin be accounted for; and this has never yet been done.

Ideas of extension are also afforded by *the sense of*

\* See Note A.



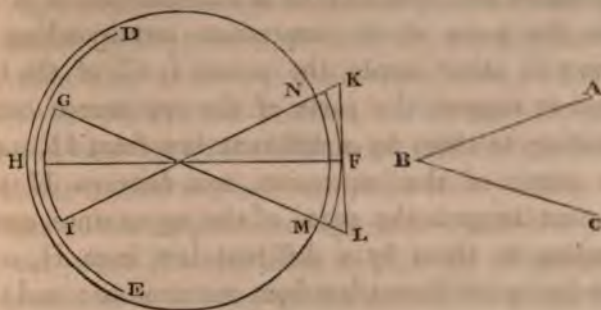
*sight*, and the larger or smaller the impression on the organ, the larger or smaller, other things being equal, is the portion of extension of which we obtain the idea. Some indeed contend, that sight affords only *sensations of colour*, and no idea of extension at all; but this opinion has never been established by adequate evidence; and it appears to be incompatible with not a few phenomena. At any rate, *in the present state of our knowledge*, we certainly have by sight ideas of extension, and ideas of greater or smaller portions of it, other things being equal, according to the impressions on the organ; and are bound, therefore, to regard this as an ultimate principle, till it be traced to one more general. This, so far as I know, has never yet been done, and I am utterly unable to perceive how it can be done.

In connexion, too, with the ideas of visual extension, there is always a sensation—to wit, a sensation of colour; and this sensation seems *diffused* over the extension of which we obtain the idea, and blended with it. The law of correspondence, therefore, holds so far with regard to sight.

It is generally supposed, however, that every object appears to the eye as a straight line, or a plane superficies; whereas, impressions on the eye, as every one knows, are always concave: and though ideas of visual extension, therefore, may correspond with the *magnitude*, yet they cannot correspond, it may be thought, with the *form* of the impressions.

The opinion, that every object appears to the eye as a straight line, or a plane superficies, though supported by some of the highest names in philosophy, is

far, I imagine, from being well-founded. The following diagram will illustrate what I conceive to be the true state of the case.



Let  $ABC$  be a plane angle, formed by the lines  $AB, BC$ ; let  $DEF$  be the eye,  $DHE$ , the retina, and  $GHI$ , the picture of the angle on the retina. Let the centre of the eye be in the same plane with the lines  $AB, BC$ , and be directly opposite to the point  $B$ , where the lines meet and form the angle.

According to the common doctrine, the two straight lines  $AB, BC$ , will seem to form one straight line, and have the appearance of  $KFL$  close upon the eye.

Bisect  $GHI$ , the picture on the retina: Bisect also  $KFL$ : Join  $H$  and  $F$ , the two points of bisection: Join likewise  $IK$ , and  $GL$ .

From the well-known laws of vision, it is evident that the point  $F$  of the appearance is suggested by the point  $H$  of the impression; the point  $K$  of the appearance, by the point  $I$  of the impression; and the



point L of the appearance, by the point G of the impression. The line H F, however, is shorter than either of the lines I K, G L; and the point F, therefore, is seen at a less distance from the part of the impression corresponding to it than the points K L, from the parts of the impression corresponding to them; in other words, the points I, G, of the impression, suggest the parts of the appearance corresponding to them by a different law from H. All the points of the impression, too, *between* H and G, must suggest the parts of the appearance corresponding to them by a different law from H, and likewise by a different law from one another; and the same must be the case with the points *between* H and I. But what reason have we to believe that the points of the impression operate according to different laws? As far as we can judge, an impression on one part of the retina operates exactly as an impression on another. There is not a shadow of reason for imagining, that they operate according to different laws. If they operate, however, according to the same, the two lines A B, B C, instead of having the appearance of the straight line K F L, will have the appearance of the curve line N F M,—the point N being at the same distance from I, that F is from H, and M from G.

If this view of the subject be correct, all objects, in as far as single vision is concerned, must appear to have the same form with their pictures on the retina. A straight line will have the appearance of a curve; two straight lines situated with regard to the eye as A B, B C, will likewise have the appearance of a curve. A plane superficies will have the appearance of part of



a hollow sphere. A solid will likewise have the appearance of part of a hollow sphere. In other words, the law of correspondence, in as far as single vision is concerned, will apply as exactly to Sight as to Touch.

Again : When impressions are made on *both eyes*, it uniformly happens that there are two appearances corresponding to the two impressions, except when the eyes are in a certain position, which may be called their natural position. It likewise uniformly happens, that the nearer the eyes approach this position, the nearer do the appearances approach one another, till, at last, when the eyes come to the very position, the appearances altogether coincide, and of course form but *one appearance*. It also uniformly happens, that after the appearances coincide, the united or combined appearance is much more vivid than the separate ones. So that, in strict propriety, there are two appearances *in every case*, corresponding to the two impressions, only in a certain position of the eyes the appearances seem to occupy the same spot, and consequently to form but one appearance. In other words, the law of correspondence applies as completely to Sight as to Touch.

From the supposition that every object appears to the eye as a straight line or a plane superficies, is derived the common doctrine, that the eye alone affords ideas of extension only in two dimensions ; but if the doctrine now mentioned be just, the eye must afford ideas of extension in three dimensions, for every part of a hollow sphere has three dimensions. This doctrine, however, will have no influence on our conclusions respecting the acquired perceptions of sight, for

in whatever way objects originally appear to the eye, whether as a plane or as a curve, they must still appear to be close upon the eye, as soon as the eye is known to be the organ that affords them; and the notions which we afterwards obtain of their distance must be acquired in the one case exactly as in the other.

*The Sense of Taste* is generally believed to afford only sensations of taste, such as *sweet, sour, bitter, &c.*; but, from several phenomena, I am inclined to believe that this opinion is by no means tenable, and that the law of Correspondence applies to Taste as well as to Sight and Touch.

We always find that an impression on *the organ of Taste* is accompanied not only with a sensation, but also with an idea of the *part of the organ affected*. An impression on the tongue is accompanied with a sensation and an idea of the tongue's being the part affected, and we are apt to think that the tongue feels the sensation, or that we feel the sensation in the tongue. An impression on a small part of the tongue,—on the point of it for example,—is accompanied with a sensation and an idea of a small part of the tongue's being affected; an impression on a large part is accompanied with a sensation and an idea of a large part's being affected; an impression on the whole upper surface of the tongue is accompanied with a sensation and an idea of the whole upper surface of the tongue's being affected. That is, precisely as by Touch and Sight, we have by Taste ideas of extension corresponding to the form and magnitude of the impressions, for it is impossible to have an idea of the



dimensions of any thing extended without having an idea of a portion of extension corresponding to its form and magnitude. As in the case of Touch and Sight, too, the sensations suggested by Taste seem always *diffused* over the extension of which we obtain the idea, and blended with it.

Perhaps, however, it may be said, that though, *at present*, we have by Taste ideas of extension corresponding to the impressions on the organ, yet there is no reason to believe that this is the case in infancy, or that Taste *originally* affords such ideas. They may be acquired, it may be thought, by experience.

In all our inquiries into the human mind, it is plain we must begin with the phenomena of mature life. Of the mental operations of infants we have no direct knowledge, and it is only by observing and analysing the complicated phenomena of after years that we can ever learn what the infant mind is engaged in. Now the question with regard to Taste stands exactly thus: By Touch and Sight in mature age we have ideas of extension, by Taste we have the same; by Touch and Sight in mature age we have ideas of extension corresponding to the form and magnitude of the impressions; by Taste we have so likewise; in the case of Touch and Sight in mature age the sensations which accompany the ideas seem *diffused* over the extension and blended with it, and the same is the case in Tasting. On what principle then is it inferred, that the former originally give ideas of extension, and that the latter does not? The analogy between them is complete. Whatever argument affects the one affects them all, and the same reason that makes us ascribe

to experience the ideas of extension afforded by Taste would equally make us ascribe to it those afforded by Sight and Touch.

Dr Brown, though his opinions are exceeding different from those which I have ventured to suggest yet distinctly allows that if ideas of extension be originally afforded by *any* of our organs of sense, they are very probably afforded by them *all*. "We are apt to forget," says he, in his *Twenty-Second Lecture* "in inquiries of this sort, that it is not in our organ of *Touch merely* that a certain extent of the nervous extremity of our sensorial organ is affected. This occurs, equally, in *every other organ*. In the superficial expansion of the nerves of hearing, smell, taste, for example, it is not a *point* merely that is affected, but a *number of continuous points*, precisely as in the superficial organ of Touch; and if, therefore, the notion of *extension* in general, or of *figure* which is *limited extension*, arose whenever a part of the nervous expansion was affected in any way, we should derive these notions as much from a taste, a smell, or a sound, as from any of the configurations or affections of our organ of Touch." Dr Brown offers the alternative, that *none* of our senses originally affords ideas of extension, while I cannot but reckon the former more philosophical, in the present state of our knowledge, to take the other alternative,—that they all afford such ideas.

It is highly probable that *the organ of Touch* affords ideas of extension, according to the following evidence. An impression on this organ is always accompanied with a sensation and an idea of



part affected. When the effluvia which excite smell are strongly inhaled into the nostrils, they strike with greater force on the upper extremities than on the lower, and in such a case we easily perceive that the upper extremities are most powerfully affected, and feel as if the strongest part of the sensation were situated in the upper extremities, or as if the upper extremities felt the sensation most intensely. If the upper extremities, on the other hand, be partially stopped while the effluvia are allowed to strike freely on the lower, we easily perceive, on making an inhalation, that the lower extremities are the parts affected, and feel as if the sensation were situated in the lower extremities. In fine, if one of the nostrils be shut while the other is left open, we easily perceive, on making an inhalation, that the open one is the part affected, and feel as if the sensation were situated in the open one. We have therefore by smelling, exactly as by tasting, ideas of the different parts of the organ which receive the impressions, and consequently ideas of portions of extension corresponding to them.

*The sense of Hearing* seems to be governed by the same law. Indeed, if the law of Correspondence apply to Touch, Sight, Taste, and Smell, it is very unlikely that it does not apply to *Hearing* also. The analogy of Sight is particularly worthy of attention. There are few particulars in which Seeing and Hearing do not agree. In both the organ is double, while the sensations are single; in both the sensations are associated, not with the idea of the organ, but with ideas of external objects; and by both we acquire some notion of the distance of external ob-

jects, and also of their direction. As they agree in so many particulars, it is highly probable that they agree in respect of the law of Correspondence likewise.

All the phenomena, too, are conformable to this law, and may be easily explained by it. The sensations afforded by Hearing arise from impressions on the ear produced by sounding objects. According to the distance of the objects, the impressions, other things being equal, must be the weaker ; and according to their direction the impressions must be weaker on some parts of the organ than on others. And consequently the sensations excited by some parts of the organ must be weaker than those excited by others.

This last remark is an obvious one ; for the different parts of the external ear, being unequally exposed to the undulations occasioned by sounding bodies, must be unequally affected by them, a similar inequality must be communicated to the internal parts which excite the sensations, and consequently to the sensations themselves. When the direction of the object varies, the impressions on the external parts must also vary ; those on the internal must do the same, and consequently the sensations which depend on them.

From these facts the phenomena may be explained with great readiness. For, as the sensations vary according to the distance of the objects, experience will soon enable us to acquire some notion of that distance, and as they also vary according to the direction of the objects, experience will equally soon enable us to acquire some notion of the direction. As the objects, too, are more apt to obtain notice than the organ, the

Sensations must soon become connected with ideas of the objects, and seem to proceed from them.\*

In perfect conformity with the phenomena, too, ideas of the distance and direction of objects obtained by hearing, must be much more inaccurate than those obtained by seeing. In *seeing*, the impressions on the organ vary in *magnitude* as well as in strength according to the distance of the objects, and the seemingly diffused sensations do the same; whereas in *hearing*, the impressions on the organ are always of the same *magnitude*, let the objects be where they may, and consequently the seemingly diffused sensations must always appear to be of the same extent. From these latter sensations experience cannot possibly enable us to acquire such accurate ideas of the distance and direction of objects as from the former. The undulations of the air, too, by which impressions in the case of hearing are occasioned, are subject to far greater irregularities than the rays of light which occasion the

\* I am far from meaning to assert that hearing originally gives us any idea of the distance or direction of sounding bodies. On the contrary, the doctrine of the text is, that the original ideas afforded by hearing merely correspond to the extent of nervous expansion affected by the undulations of the air, and that it is from *experience* we learn the distance and direction of things.

But how is this experience acquired? In mature age we often know by hearing whether an object be on the right hand, or the left, before or behind, above or beneath us, although we were previously altogether ignorant of its situation and even of its existence. If hearing originally afford ideas of extension corresponding to the nervous expansion affected by the undulations of the air, the case is easily explained, for it is analogous to the case of *seeing*; but if hearing do not originally afford ideas of extension, the phenomena appear to be utterly unaccountable.



impressions in seeing, a circumstance which must farther increase the disadvantage against hearing. And besides we are not so much accustomed to judge of distance and direction by hearing as by seeing, a circumstance which must have considerable influence the same way.

I shall only farther remark, that while the law of Correspondence enables us to explain the phenomena of hearing without difficulty, the common doctrine, that hearing originally affords only sensations of sound, seems utterly incapable of explaining them, and every attempt to explain them on this principle has hitherto failed.

But ideas are suggested not only by impressions on the *external parts* of the body, but also by impressions on those that are *internal*. Some are suggested by impressions occasioned by disease;—such as the sensations excited by *headach*, *toothach*, *heartburn*, the *gout*, &c. Others are suggested by impressions occasioned by respiration,—such as the sensations excited by the movements of the parts on which the process of respiration depends, and those excited by the action of the air on the mouth, throat, and lungs. Many are suggested by impressions occasioned by affections of the mind. In violent anger the body is often so agitated as to excite very discernible sensations. The same is the case in violent grief, fear, joy, and every other powerful affection whatever. Even in their weaker states, there can be little doubt that the affections of the mind occasion impressions on the body which excite sensations, although from their faintness they are apt to escape notice. In short, almost the



whole of the body, whether *external* or *internal*, is sensitive; and an impression on every sensitive part, whether occasioned by an external or internal influence, is accompanied with a sensation.

It is also accompanied, I imagine, with an idea of extension corresponding to the form and magnitude of the impression. In many cases the existence of such an idea is indisputable. In the disorder styled *headach*, the impression affects a considerable part of the forehead, and the painful sensation seems uniformly to be *diffused* over the same place.

The influence of fatigue, of anger, fear, grief, and other strong passions, affects almost every part of the body, and the sensations are uniformly accompanied with the idea that almost every part of the body is affected. They are accompanied, of course, with an idea of extension corresponding to those parts. We frequently speak, too, of pain's moving from place to place, of the whole of such a part's being pained, of pain's being fixed in a particular spot, &c.—language which clearly indicates ideas of extension corresponding to the parts affected.

Upon the whole, I imagine, we may safely conclude, that the law of Correspondence holds universally, or, that in every case an impression on a sensitive part of the body,—and almost every part of the body is sensitive,—is accompanied with a sensation and an idea of a portion of extension corresponding to the extent of the impression by which the sensation is excited.

It follows from this law, that the smallest impression which is capable of suggesting an idea of exten-

sion, suggests a sensation, and an idea of the smallest portion of extension which the Senses are capable of perceiving. This is an obvious consequence; for as the impressions and ideas exactly correspond, it must happen that if the one be diminished the other must be diminished in the same proportion, and consequently when we arrive at the least impression that can excite an idea, we must obtain an idea of the least portion of extension we are capable of perceiving.

The least portion of extension which we are capable of perceiving must appear to the mind to be altogether destitute of parts. In fact, it must appear, in the strictest sense of the word, to be a mere point, and may properly enough be styled a *sensible point*. Did it appear to have parts, it could not be the least portion which we are capable of perceiving. The idea, too, of such a portion must appear to be destitute of parts, and to be a simple idea. It is allowed, I believe, on all hands, that the idea of a sensible point is a simple idea.

Any portion of extension, such as an inch, a foot, or a yard, is divisible into a number of sensible points, and our idea of such a portion must *seem* to be divisible into an equal number of simple ideas. As our idea of every such point, too, is connected with a sensation, the sensation which is connected with the whole must *seem* to be divisible into parts equally numerous: And hence, in conceiving any considerable portion of extension, we must *seem* to experience a very great number of simple ideas.\*

\* See Note B.

Every sensible point of extension must appear equal to every other sensible point. There can be no such thing as the *appearance* of inequality among sensible points, any more than a *real* inequality among *real* points. Were we to perceive two points where now we perceive only one, each of them would appear equal to that one : And were we to perceive only one point where now we perceive two, that one would appear equal to only one of the two. These remarks lead to some curious conclusions.

As extension is divisible to infinity, we might have been so framed as to perceive in the smallest assignable part of it any number of points whatsoever. In the same portion, where at present we perceive only one point, we might have been so framed as to perceive two, three, four, or any number imaginable. Had we been so framed as to perceive two points in a portion where now we perceive only one, that portion had appeared double of what it now does. Had we been so framed as to perceive three points in a portion where now we perceive only one, that portion had appeared triple of what it now does ; and so on. In short, we might have been so framed as to perceive the same number of points in an inch which we now perceive in a mile, and in that case the inch had appeared as long as a mile.

Had we been framed with duller perceptions, the very reverse had happened. What now appears a mile might have appeared an inch, or any smaller portion.\*

Our idea of *figure* is the idea of the *limits* or *boun-*

\* See Note C.



daries of extension. This idea, therefore, is involved in that of extension, and is a mere modification of it. It is impossible to obtain an idea of any portion of extension, without obtaining an idea of its limits or boundaries.

Our idea of *place* is the idea of the *situation of one part of extension with regard to some other*. This idea, therefore, is also involved in that of extension, and is a mere modification of it. It is impossible to have an idea of any portion of extension, without having an idea of the situation of its parts with regard to one another.

Our idea of *roughness* is the idea of a portion of extension's being divided into *small protuberances*. This idea, likewise, is a mere modification of that of extension. The protuberances into which any portion of extension is divided, are themselves portions of extension, situated in a particular way with regard to others, and our ideas of them are merely ideas of such portions so situated.

Our idea of *smoothness* is the idea of a portion of extension's *not* being divided into *small protuberances*, and, like the foregoing, it is merely a modification of the idea of extension.

All these ideas are suggested in connexion with certain sensations, which, for the most part, are merely sensations of colour, or modifications of the sensation of touch.

Ideas of extension include ideas of things as *exterior* and *interior* to one another. If we obtain, for example, the idea of a circular inch, we must at the same time obtain an idea of its circumference as *exte-*



*rior* to its centre, and of its centre as *interior* to its circumference. The very nature of the idea of extension includes that of *partes extra partes*, and likewise that of *partes intra partes*,—so that our notions of *exterior* and *interior*, in as far as the extension of an organic impression is concerned, are easily accounted for. They are involved in the very conception of the extension which the impression affords.

We cannot, however, it must be observed, obtain, in this way, an idea of any thing as *exterior* or *interior* with regard to our *own persons*. Impressions on the body afford ideas corresponding to the parts affected, but beyond these they afford no idea at all. It is by a totally different process, as I shall afterwards endeavour to show, that the idea of *outness*, or *externality*, in regard to ourselves, is obtained.

## SECT. II.

### *Ideas of Duration.*

*Our ideas of duration*, like those of extension, seem obviously to arise from the *sensitive principle* of the mind. The evidence for this opinion is precisely similar to what was urged in the preceding section. We never but find that an impression on a sensitive organ is accompanied with an idea of *duration*, as well as with a *sensation* and an idea of *extension*; and as all these ideas, to the best of our judgment, are experienced at the same *instant*, we have equal reason to refer them all to the same source. No person pretends that he can experience an impression on the organs of Sense without experiencing an idea of duration, nor does

any person pretend that he can discern the slightest interval between this idea and those now mentioned, and to ascribe them therefore to different sources seems very unreasonable.

The law, according to which impressions on the organs of Sense suggest ideas of duration, appears to be the following : *Every impression, besides suggesting a sensation and an idea of extension, suggests, in connexion with them, an idea of a portion of duration corresponding to the duration of the impression.* That is, an impression, which exists for one sensible point of duration, suggests a sensation, an idea of extension, and an idea of one sensible point of duration ; an impression, which exists for two sensible points of duration, suggests a sensation, an idea of extension, and an idea of two sensible points of duration, and so on.\*

If, instead of one impression, there should be two or more, the case will in no respect be altered ; for as the ideas do not correspond to the amount of simultaneous impressions, but to the length of time that each of them continues, an individual impression, if

\* *By a sensible point of duration, I mean the smallest portion of duration of which an impression on the organs of Sense can afford an idea. Such a portion must evidently appear to the mind to be a mere point, and being suggested by our sensitive organs, may be styled a sensible point.*

I may also remark, that when I speak of an idea of duration as corresponding to the duration of the impression, I do not mean that there are ideas of the whole duration in the mind at the *same instant*. I only mean that there are ideas of as many sensible points of duration as are contained in the duration of the impression, although they may exist *successively*.



its continuance be equal, will suggest as many as a number.

Every sensible point of duration must appear to the mind to be equal to every other sensible point. There can be no such thing as the *appearance* of inequality among sensible points, any more than a real inequality among real points. Were we to perceive two points where now we perceive only one, each of them would appear equal to that one. Were we to perceive one point where now we perceive two, that one would appear equal to only one of the two. These remarks lead to some conclusions with regard to duration, as curious as those formerly mentioned with regard to extension.

As duration is divisible to infinity, we might have been so framed as to perceive in the smallest assignable portion of it any number of sensible points whatsoever. In the same portion where at present we perceive only one point, we might have been so framed as to perceive two, three, or any number imaginable. Had we been so framed as to perceive two points in a portion where now we perceive only one, that portion appeared double of what it now does. Had we been so framed as to perceive three points in a portion where now we perceive only one, that portion had appeared treble of what it now does, and so on. In short, we might have been so framed as to perceive the same number of points in a second which at present we perceive in twenty years, and in that case the second had appeared as long as twenty years.

Had we been framed with duller perceptions, the very reverse had happened. What now appears twen-



ty years, might have appeared a second, or any shorter period.

I may also remark, that as the circumstance of correspondence applies both to our ideas of extension and to those of duration, the principle which regulates their suggestion ought not to be regarded as two distinct principles, but merely as two distinct branches of the same principle, and may be stated thus : *Every impression on our organs of Sense suggests a sensation, and in connexion with it an idea of extension and of duration corresponding to the extent and duration of the impression.*

Our ideas of duration, suggested by impressions, must continue in the mind for some time. It is exceedingly unlikely, indeed, that they should vanish the very *instant* they appear. Our other ideas suggested by impressions remain for a little, and beyond all question those of duration do the same.

By continuing for a little we may come to have several of them in the mind at the same moment. Suppose, for example, that every idea of duration continues for a *Second*, and the consequence will be, that before the one suggested at the beginning of the second has vanished, a number of others will successively have appeared, and as they all continue for a second, the whole of them at the end of the second will be in the mind simultaneously—the first being in the last stage of its existence, the second in the last but one, the third in the last but two, and so on. At the end of the second, though ideas of other points will be successively suggested, yet no addition will be

made to the co-existing quantity, since, as fast as new ones occur, an equal number of the old ones vanish.

I certainly do not allege that every idea of duration suggested by impressions continues in the mind for a second, for there can hardly be a doubt that its continuance is shorter. I make the supposition merely for illustration, and to show that by each idea's continuing for a little, a number of them may come into a state of *co-existence*. Several phenomena may be explained on this principle.

When a number of sounds occur in pretty rapid succession, we experience a mixed kind of perception, the ingredients of which seem almost contradictory. The sounds appear to occur *in succession*, and yet we seem to hear several of them at the *same moment*. The following is evidently the explanation.

Each of the sounds is suggested in connexion with an idea of the point of duration at which it makes its appearance,—that is *in succession*—and as they all continue for a little, several of them come to be in the mind at the same time. The consequence is, that though they occur in succession, yet several of them come to be observed simultaneously.

The influence of Memory to which such phenomena have been sometimes ascribed, is utterly inadequate to account for them. The ideas afforded by Memory, it is well known, are generally *very faint*, whereas a succession of sounds is usually as *vivid* as any we obtain. Memory, besides, never means the *first* appearance of things to the mind, but their second, or third, or some after appearance; whereas a succession of sounds is heard as distinctly *at first* as at any time

afterwards. The common people never ascribe such phenomena to *Memory* but always to *Sense*, and talk of *hearing* a succession of sounds without having the most distant conception that any other principle than *hearing* is concerned in the operation. The sentiments of the common people in this case, I am persuaded, as well as in many others, are much nearer the truth than those of philosophers.

In a similar way are we to explain the phenomena of Motion. If an object be observed in a particular point of time and place, and, before our ideas of these points vanish, it be observed in a number of other points of time and place, we must evidently have in our mind at the same instant ideas of its existing in different points of time and place,—that is, *at the same instant* we must seem to observe it existing *successively* in different places; or, we must observe it moving.

If, before the idea of an object's existing in a particular point of time and place vanish, it be observed in a considerable number of other points of time and place, there must be in the mind at the same instant ideas of its existing in a considerable number of other points of time and place; that is, we must observe it moving *quickly*. If before the idea of an object's existing in a particular point of time and place vanish, it be observed only in a small number of other points of time and place, there must be in the mind at the same instant ideas of its existing in only a small number of points of time and place; that is, we must observe it moving *slowly*. If, before the idea of an object's existing in a particular point of time and place



evanish, it be not observed in any other point of place at all, there must be in the mind at the same instant ideas of its existing in different points of time, but only on one point of place ; that is, we cannot observe it moving at all, even though it be moving in reality. In fine, if an object change its place so rapidly as to exist in several sensible points of place in a single sensible point of time, it must appear to be in several places at the same instant ; that is, it must appear to form a line. The more rapidly it changes its situation, the more places must it appear to exist in at the same instant ; that is, the line must appear the longer. If in the course of a single sensible point of time it move round in a circle, the line will appear to form a circle, and so long as the motion continues the circle will appear stationary. All these conclusions so obviously accord with experience, that any illustration of them is totally unnecessary.

The origin of our ideas of motion, like that of a succession of sounds, has sometimes been imputed to memory, but, if possible, with still less reason ; for not only are such ideas more vivid than those of memory, and presented on the *first appearance* of a moving object, it frequently happens that we have the memory of the successive existence of objects in different places without having any idea of motion at all. I remember to have seen the minute hand of my watch on every point of the dial-plate, but it moved so slowly that I never could perceive its motion.

The idea of motion, instead of being a simple idea, as is usually imagined, is considerably complex. It not only involves the idea of some object, but also ideas

of different points of time and place, and of an object as existing in different points of time and place.

Another class of phenomena to be explained as the above, is exhibited by certain changes in the qualities of objects. If a red-hot ember fall from the fire, it becomes fainter and fainter by very quick gradations, and, in such a case, we seem to see it becoming fainter and fainter, and must consequently have in our minds at the same instant ideas of several of the gradations. The explanation, however, of this and all such phenomena, must now be quite evident.

Our ideas of hardness and softness are founded on those of motion. The idea of hardness is the idea of the different parts of an object's being with difficulty moved out of their situation with regard to one another; and the idea of softness, the idea of the different parts of an object's being easily moved out of their situation with regard to one another. Both these ideas are originally suggested in connexion with certain sensations, which are commonly nothing but modifications of the sensation of touch.

Ideas of two or more points of duration include those of things as *prior* and *posterior* to one another. If we obtain ideas of two sounds in quick succession, we must have at the same time an idea of the first as *prior* to the second, and likewise an idea of the second as *posterior* to the first. The very nature of the idea of two or more points of duration includes that of *parts as prior to parts*, and likewise of *parts as posterior to parts*,—so that our ideas of *prior* and *posterior*, in as far as short portions of duration are concerned, are easily accounted for; they are involved in



the conceptions of duration suggested by impressions on our organs of Sense.

The idea of *present time* is the idea of that portion of time in which we ourselves are existing, as the idea of *present place* is the idea of that portion of *space* in which we ourselves are existing. Or rather perhaps I should say, the idea of present time is merely the idea of that small portion of duration which is afforded by organic impressions. Some, indeed, contend that *present time* is the *point* which divides the *past* from the *future*, but this is certainly a mistaken notion. In the ordinary meaning of the expression, *present time* is not the *point* which divides the past from the future, but the *small portion* of time which *intervenes* between the past and the future. The common people would not hesitate to say, not only that they *hear* a succession of sounds, and *see* the motion of bodies, but that they hear the succession and see the motion *at present*,—plainly comprehending in the meaning of the word *present*, a small portion of time.

I may also remark, that the *present imperfect tense* of verbs—such as, *he is reading*, *he is speaking*, *he is running*, *he is walking*—obviously implies *continuation*, and is quite incompatible with the supposition that *present time* is merely a *point*. The common doctrine of philosophers gives no explanation of this circumstance, while the doctrine I have stated explains it at once.

Locke maintains that our ideas of duration arise from our observing the *succession* of our other ideas ; but this opinion seems clearly to be untenable. Our



observing the succession of ideas can be nothing but our observing them as existing in different points of duration, and instead, therefore, of giving rise to ideas of duration, it necessarily supposes them. We can have no idea of succession without an idea of duration. We frequently speak, too, of a quick succession of ideas, and of a slow succession. A quick succession is experienced when each idea passes quickly out of the mind, and consequently is of short continuance. A slow succession is experienced when each idea passes slowly out of the mind, and consequently is of longer continuance. But if succession be the circumstance which gives rise to ideas of duration, we never could have any notion of the continuance of an individual idea, and all successions of ideas would appear equally quick.

Other philosophers seem to imagine, that though ideas of duration do not arise from our observing the *succession* of other ideas, yet they arise from these other ideas themselves. According to this opinion, the ideas of duration accompanying organic impressions are not, strictly speaking, suggested by the impressions, but by the sensations and ideas of extension which the impressions afford. This opinion is precisely analogous to that of Dr Reid respecting extension, and it is equally without evidence. An impression, as already remarked, is always accompanied with a sensation, an idea of extension, and an idea of duration; and as no person can discern the smallest interval between them, it is by far the most philosophical course to refer them all to the same origin. The close analogy, indeed, between duration and extension would

lead us to refer the ideas of them to the same origin, independently of every other consideration.

Reid and Stewart are of opinion that the origin of our ideas of duration is to be referred to *memory*; but this opinion is utterly incompatible with the phenomena, as is evident from our *hearing* a succession of sounds, *seeing* the motion of bodies, and many other facts. By far the most simple and rational doctrine is, that our ideas of duration arise from impressions on our organs of sense.\*

Some have alleged that the mind has no ideas at all, but what primarily come from organic impressions. This doctrine, however, cannot properly be examined till all the more general principles of the mind are ascertained, and then its truth or its falsity will result as a corollary.

To give a short summary of what has been already stated. Every organic impression suggests a sensation, and in connexion with it an idea of extension and du-

\* Philosophers are entitled to commendation for endeavouring to avoid *excessive* simplification, and rise superior to the *prejudices* of the common people; but it is surely unwise to multiply principles *unnecessarily*, and resist the *sentiments* of the common people without any visible reason. The common people are perfectly persuaded, that by means of their *bodily senses* they observe *successions* of sound, that they observe bodies *in motion*, that they observe *changes* taking place in things, and that they observe causes *producing* effects. All these, and many other similar phenomena, may be explained in a few sentences, if we admit that impressions on our sensitive organs give rise to *ideas of duration*; but if we reject this doctrine, they are utterly inexplicable on any known principle. Memory, to which some are disposed to refer them, is completely inadequate to account for the peculiar features they exhibit.

ration corresponding to the extent and duration of the impression. By means of impressions, therefore, we may obtain ideas of the whole or of any part of our own body, and likewise of the whole or of any part of that small portion of duration usually styled *present time*. We may consequently obtain by impressions ideas of *figure*, of *place*, of *roughness*, of *smoothness*, of *exterior*, of *interior*, &c. ; also ideas of *succession*, of *motion*, of *hardness*, of *softness*, of *prior*, of *posterior*, &c. In short, we may obtain by impressions a variety of ideas of very high importance, and on which as a foundation, the other principles of our nature may raise a superstructure the most extensive and interesting.

The *vividness* of ideas suggested by impressions, is always in proportion, other things being equal, to the force with which the impressions are made. A strong impression, other things being equal, is uniformly accompanied with a more vivid idea than a weak one.

This remark, however, must not be understood as applying to impressions so strong as to hurt the sensibility of the organ ; for such impressions, instead of exciting very vivid ideas, hardly excite any idea at all. A glare of light which hurts the eye, instead of enabling us to see clearly, almost blinds us.

I may likewise remark, that the observation must be understood as applying only to impressions of the *same kind* ; for, as to impressions of different kinds, we have no means of ascertaining their comparative force. An impression which suggests a sensation of smell, cannot be compared with an impression which



suggests a sensation of colour ; for, being totally different in their nature, there is no common standard by which their relative force can be measured. But with respect to impressions of the *same kind*—such as impressions which suggest sensations of touch,—we can easily compare them with each other, and we always find that in proportion to their force, other things being equal, is the vividness of the sensations they excite.

Though in the case, however, of different kinds of impressions, we cannot ascertain whether or not the vividness of the ideas suggested be in proportion to their force ; yet, as the one kind may be increased to any extent, and the other diminished, it is easy to see that they may be so adjusted as to suggest ideas *equally vivid*. Impressions which suggest ideas *equally vivid*, may be said to have *equal power* to suggest ideas, while those which suggest ideas *unequally vivid* may be said to have *unequal power*. The vividness of ideas, consequently, must always be regarded as proportional to the power of impressions to suggest them.

Another circumstance respecting ideas suggested by impressions which merits attention is, that their vividness is very much affected by their number.\* A very little reflection may convince us that a great many ideas may be in the mind at the same instant. When

\* This and the two following remarks apply equally to ideas suggested by association. I may also observe, that though the existence of a plurality of ideas in the mind at the same time is *only apparent*, yet it is hardly possible to avoid speaking of it as *real*. Dr Brown has very correctly stated this *seeming plurality* in his tenth Lecture. See Note B.

an impression is made on the eye, the least portion of it capable of suggesting ideas suggests an idea of colour, and an idea of the smallest portion of extension which the eye can discern. In an impression on the eye there may be many such portions, the ideas of portions of extension must be equally numerous, and likewise those of colour ; and as all the parts of the impression are made at the same moment, the ideas must all be experienced at the same moment.

But at the time that an impression is made on the eye, others of equal power to suggest ideas may be made on the external and internal parts of the organ of Touch, and also on the organs of Tasting, Hearing, and Smelling. For every one of the least parts of these impressions capable of suggesting ideas, there will be suggested a sensation, and an idea of a portion of extension ; and as all the impressions exist at the *same time* with that on the eye, the ideas must all exist at the same time with the ideas suggested by that on the eye. Though it may not be possible, therefore, to ascertain the precise quantity of ideas which may exist in the mind at the same time, yet it is easy to see that the quantity may be very considerable.

The vividness of ideas is always the less, other things being equal, in proportion to their number. We scarcely ever obtain so vivid ideas of a great many objects as of one or two, and are always attentive when we wish to obtain clear views of things to contemplate as few of them at a time as possible.

A third circumstance which merits attention is, that the vividness of ideas suggested by impressions



is very much affected by the vividness of coexisting ideas. If a number of impressions all equally capable of suggesting ideas be made on different parts of the body at the same instant, a number of ideas, all equally vivid, will be suggested at the same instant. If the force of any of these impressions, however, be increased, the vividness of the corresponding ideas will likewise be increased, while the vividness of the rest will be diminished; and if the force of any of the impressions be diminished, the vividness of the corresponding ideas will also be diminished, while the vividness of the rest will be increased. In the one case the vividness of the rest will be diminished, and in the other increased, although the impressions by which they are excited suffer no manner of alteration, and the whole change be in the state of the coexisting impressions.

This case is often exemplified. When we wish to obtain clear views of any thing, and cannot totally exclude extraneous circumstances, we always endeavour to render them as faint as possible. While listening to a public speaker, if we cannot altogether avoid being annoyed by other sounds, we try, at least, to be annoyed by only weak ones.

The mind, it would appear, has always a tendency to possess the same *quantum* of ideas, so that if their number be increased their vividness is diminished, and if their number be diminished their vividness is increased: And if the vividness of any of them be increased the vividness of the rest is diminished, and if the vividness of any of them be diminished, the vividness of the rest is increased.

If ideas be rendered less and less vivid by the in-



creasing brightness of coexisting ones, there cannot be a doubt that, in some cases, they may be totally excluded by coexisting ones—the latter class may be so increased in vividness as to make the former become hardly discernible, and at last to vanish altogether. The impressions which correspond to them may still remain, and, strictly speaking, may have power to suggest them, but fail to do so from being counteracted. The more forcible impressions suggest the *full quantum* of ideas which the mind is capable of entertaining, and the less forcible therefore can suggest none.

A fourth circumstance which merits attention is, that the vividness of ideas suggested by impressions is much affected, within certain limits, by the length of time they remain in the mind. Ideas, it is well known, often pass through the mind with prodigious rapidity, and possess, of course, but a very transient duration; but such ideas, though suggested by very forcible impressions, always appear faint. Their duration is so evanescent, that they have not time, as we are apt to say, to become vivid. When the rapidity of their transition is retarded and their existence prolonged, they immediately become more vivid, though the force of the impressions has suffered no alteration. If the rapidity be farther retarded the vividness is increased, and so on, till they exist so long as to arrive at their full vividness. This space, I imagine, is that small portion of duration which *intervenies* between the past and the future, and which, as I have already remarked, is usually styled *present time*.

It must be observed, however, that I am far from denying the existence of constitutional diversities

among mankind, in regard to the suggestion of ideas by organic impressions. There cannot be a doubt that the senses of some men are naturally more acute than those of others, and that the minds of some men are naturally more susceptible of vivid ideas than those of others; and, in all probability, there are other constitutional diversities. But such diversities do not interfere with the law of Correspondence in the slightest degree. Unless it can be shown that there are persons so constituted that impressions on their organs of sense do not suggest sensations and ideas of extension and duration corresponding to the extent and duration of the impressions, the law of Correspondence must be considered as holding without exception; and there is not the smallest reason to imagine that there are any persons so constituted. On the contrary, all mankind, even those who are destitute of some organs of sense altogether, seem manifestly, in respect of the general law of Suggestion, to be entirely alike.

The opinions of Philosophers respecting the origin of ideas are exceedingly various. Des Cartes imagined that the soul possesses a large stock of *innate ideas*, or common notions—*communes notions*—as he calls them, which were created with it, and are inseparable from its existence; and this opinion appears at first sight so evident, that it once prevailed very generally. Locke, however, who early turned his powerful mind to its examination, has clearly shown it to be altogether untenable.

Locke's own opinion is stated by himself as follows. "First our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct



perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them; and thus we come by those ideas we have of yellow, white, hot, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet, and all those which we call sensible qualities, which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions. This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call *Sensation*.

“Secondly: the other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is *the perception of the operations of our own minds* within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got, which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be got from things without; and such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds, which we being conscious of and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. But as I call the other *Sensation*, so I call this *Reflection*, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself.”

And, in another passage, he says, “When the Understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it



has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so make at pleasure new complex ideas ; but it is not in the power of the most exalted wit or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thoughts, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways above-mentioned, nor can any force of the understanding *destroy* those that are there, the dominion of man in this little world of his understanding being much the same as it is in the great world of visible things, wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, reaches no farther than to compound and divide the materials that are made to his hand, but can do nothing towards the making the least particle of new matter, or destroying one atom of what is already in being."

This doctrine, notwithstanding some unguarded expressions into which Locke has fallen in expounding it, is precisely the same with what has been stated more cautiously by Mr Stewart, in his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*. "The amount of the doctrine," says Stewart, "is nothing more than this ; that the first occasions on which our various intellectual faculties are exercised, are furnished by the impressions made on our organs of sense ; and consequently, that, without these impressions it would have been impossible for us to arrive at the knowledge of our faculties."

This doctrine of Locke, as explained by Stewart, is now, I believe, the prevailing doctrine in Britain, and, in the present state of our metaphysical knowledge, it is, perhaps, the most philosophical one. It

cannot be denied, however, that the principles on which Locke's ideas of reflection are founded, are gradually diminishing in number as our knowledge of the mind is extended, and that some countenance is thus given to the opinion that they may ultimately be set aside altogether, and impressions on sense be left as the only original source of ideas.

Many philosophers in France are said to embrace this last opinion, and even to represent Mr Locke as its author. I am utterly unacquainted with their mode of expounding it, and shall only therefore repeat the remark which I formerly made—that whether true or false, it cannot be properly examined till after the more general principles of the mind are ascertained, and then its truth or its falsity will result as a corollary.

It is proper to observe, however, that when the body is said to be the origin of all our ideas, the expression may have two very different meanings, which ought not to be confounded. It may either mean, that we never have any idea but what is suggested by impressions on the organs of the body, or, that we never have any idea but what is *similar* to some idea previously suggested by impressions on the organs of the body. When we say, for example, that the eye is the origin of all our ideas of colour, we may either mean that we have never any idea of colour but what is suggested by an impression on the eye, or, that we never have any idea of colour but what is *similar* to some idea previously suggested by an impression on the eye. The latter is always, or almost always, the meaning when the expression is used by British phi-



losophers ; for beyond all question they do not mean to assert that an impression on the eye is necessary to every idea of colour they obtain, being perfectly aware that a person may have ideas of colour who has lost his eye-sight altogether.

The two meanings now mentioned lead to very different conclusions. If we assert that we never have any idea but what is suggested by impressions on the organs of the body, the evidence for the *immateriality of the mind* is very considerably weakened ; whereas, if we assert that we never have any idea but what is *similar* to some idea previously suggested by impressions on the organs of the body, the evidence for the *immateriality of the mind*, instead of being weakened, is strengthened, for the assertion necessarily implies that there is some *other principle* than body which suggests ideas. No person of common judgment, I imagine, can believe that the body is the origin of all our ideas in the former sense of the expression.

I may here remark, that in conducting our metaphysical inquiries, we cannot be too much on our guard against the ambiguities of language. They are often found lurking in quarters where no human being could at first suspect their existence, and they sometimes give such plausibility to error as to impose on the most intelligent. Again and again it has been thought that the supposition of the body's being the origin of all our ideas is prejudicial to the doctrine of the *immateriality of the mind*, and yet as soon as the ambiguity of the expression is discovered, it must be seen by every one to be highly favourable to it.



## CHAP. II.

## ASSOCIATING PRINCIPLE.

## SECT. I.

*Nature of Association and prevailing Sentiments concerning it.*

DID the human mind possess no other principle than that of *Sensitiveness* mentioned in the preceding chapter, our whole stock of knowledge would be comprised in sensations and ideas of extension and duration, corresponding to the extent and duration of impressions on our sensitive organs, and in the other ideas which these involve. We should consequently be without all knowledge of things as *external*, or *past*, or *future*, and the amount of our intellectual attainments would be confined to the limited and transient feelings and conceptions that pertain to the *present*.

Whether among the vast variety of beings in nature, there be any possessed of such a constitution, it would not be easy to determine; but man is certainly a being of a different constitution, for ideas which have been suggested by organic impressions often

make their appearance afterwards without any impression whatever. Yesterday I walked into the fields in company with a friend. The form of his body made an impression on my sight, and the sound of his voice an impression on my ear, and the consequence was, that I had very distinct ideas of both. To-day I walked into the same fields *alone*, and ideas of the body and voice of my friend very readily occurred to me, though he was more than fifty miles distant. The idea which I obtained of my friend to-day, was plainly not owing to any impression made by his appearance on my organs of sense, but to the ideas of the place in which I was walking, and in which I had formerly accompanied him.

This power acquired by ideas to suggest one another, is usually styled *the Association of ideas*. It is so styled, because the suggesting ideas do not remain alone, but have acquired power to *associate* or suggest others along with them. In all cases of Association, the influence of the suggesting ideas, it must be observed, is *acquired*, and not possessed as an *original* property. It is generally supposed that ideas may suggest others by an influence that is not acquired. Every sensation, it is said, suggests the idea of a sentient being, and does so not by any acquired influence, for neither of the ideas may have formerly existed, but by some original and inherent virtue. But such influence is never regarded as belonging to *Association*. Association always refers to influence which is *acquired*.\*

\* The principle of Association affords innumerable instances illustrative of the observation made in the former chapter—that



It has been objected to the expression, Association of *ideas*, that our affections, and passions, and mental operations of every kind, are frequently associated with one another, and that if all these are to be called *ideas*, the term must be understood in a very extensive sense. But this, I imagine, is no objection. The term *idea*, in reality, applies to every kind of mental operation. When we feel an *emotion*, for example, we have uniformly some idea or conception of the feeling, but the *idea*, in such a case, is not one thing, and the *feeling* another. Both are manifestly one and the same thing, viewed merely in different lights; and the same may be said of every mental operation without exception. At the time we experience the operation we have uniformly an *idea* of it, but the *idea* and the operation are not different things, but the same thing viewed under different aspects.

Dr Brown objects to the term *Association*, that it is used by philosophers to denote some mysterious process by which ideas are connected with one another. But this objection is as invalid as the former. In common language the term has no such mysterious meaning, but merely imports that ideas excite or suggest one another.

The expression, *Association of ideas*, therefore, I imagine, should be retained as it is. If not altogether faultless, it is at least intelligible, and quite as convenient as any other that philosophers have proposed to employ in its room.

ideas are said to derive their *origin* from the body when they are merely *similar* to those which have been previously suggested by impressions on the body.



*The Association of ideas* is a branch of our constitution that is still involved in much obscurity. So much so, that scarcely any philosopher, except *Hume*, has even attempted to enumerate the laws by which it is governed; and *Hume*, it is universally allowed, has entirely failed. The prevailing opinion at present seems to be, that the laws of Association among our ideas are as numerous as the relations among their objects and circumstances connected with them, and consequently that a complete enumeration is impossible.

"It is not necessary," says Stewart, in his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, "for my present purpose, that I should enter into a critical examination of this part of *Hume's* System; or that I should attempt to specify those principles of Association which he has omitted. Indeed, it does not seem to me that the problem admits of a satisfactory solution; for there is no possible relation among the objects of our knowledge, which may not serve to connect them together in the mind; and therefore although one enumeration may be more comprehensive than another, a perfectly complete enumeration is scarcely to be expected.

"Nor is it merely in consequence of the relations among *things*, that our notions of them are associated. They are frequently coupled together by means of relations among the *words* which denote them; such as a similarity of sound, or other circumstances still more trifling. . . . . To these observations, it may be added, that things which have no known relation to each other are often associated, in conse-

quence of their producing similar effects on the mind. Some of the finest poetical allusions are founded on this principle; and accordingly, if the reader is not possessed of sensibility congenial to that of the poet, he will be apt to overlook their meaning, or to censure them as absurd."

On this doctrine, at least on that part of it which respects the relations among the objects of our ideas, I would offer the following observations.

1. If ideas suggest each other according to the relations among their objects, there must be laws of association *directly opposite* to one another, for many of the relations among objects are opposite. The relation of *similitude* is opposite to the relation of *contrast*; *upwards* is opposite to *downwards*; *superiority* to *inferiority*, and so of many others. Now, though philosophers may, perhaps with some reason, require us to believe in the existence of different associating laws, they certainly go beyond all bounds when they require us to believe in the existence of laws so completely different, as to be in direct opposition. It is impossible to believe that the Author of Nature has so framed us. Harmony, and not discord, is evidently the principle on which he has arranged the various parts of our constitution.

2. The relations among the objects of our ideas are *innumerable*, and, consequently, if ideas suggest each other according to these relations, the laws of association must also be innumerable. But can we believe that nature, which every where discovers the greatest simplicity, conducts any department of her operations by innumerable laws?

3. If ideas suggest each other according to the relations among their objects, there can be nothing in the mind but *entire confusion*. The object of every idea is evidently related to that of every other idea, for they are all observed by the same mind, are all produced by the same Author of Nature, may all be regarded by the same faculty of attention, and are all related in various other ways. Now, if ideas suggest each other according to the different relations among their objects, any idea may suggest any other idea whatsoever. It may suggest one that occurred last month, or one that occurred last second, one that occurred yesterday, or one that occurred to-day. It may suggest ideas in the order in which they were originally suggested, or in the reverse order, or in any order conceivable : Thus,

Let A, B, C, D, E, F, be different ideas, which are capable of suggesting each other according to the various relations subsisting among their objects. Then as all their objects are reciprocally related, it necessarily follows that A may suggest B, B may suggest C, C may suggest D, and so on in the direct order ; or F may suggest E, E may suggest D, D may suggest C, and so on, in the inverse order ; or A may suggest C, C may suggest F, F may suggest E, E may suggest B. In fact, there is no conceivable order in which they may not suggest one another ; and consequently, there is no regular suggestion at all, but every thing suggesting every other thing without any determinate principle to direct them.

4. When we are told that ideas suggest each other according to the relations of their objects, it will uni-



formly be found that some important circumstance is either altogether overlooked, or has not sufficient influence ascribed to it. Should the idea of Sir Isaac Newton, for instance, occur to us, it may suggest, we are told, by the relation of *similitude*, the idea of some other illustrious philosopher, or it may suggest, by the relation of *contrast*, the idea of some individual altogether illiterate. It may suggest the idea of some of his *principal discoveries*, or it may suggest merely an idea of some other person of the *same name*. But how is it possible for the same cause to produce so dissimilar effects? It does so, say philosophers, according to the different states of the mind. The idea of Sir Isaac Newton suggests at one time the idea of some illustrious philosopher, and at another the idea of some illiterate individual, not while the mind is in the same state, but in different states, and according to the difference of the states is the difference of the effect produced.

What philosophers exactly mean when they say that ideas suggest one another according to the different states of the mind, I shall not pretend to determine; but by ascribing the whole suggesting influence to the ideas, and none of it to the states of the mind, they certainly convey an impression that is not very agreeable to legitimate reasoning. If the idea of Newton be followed by that of some illustrious philosopher, while the mind is in one state, and by that of some illiterate individual, while the mind is in another, we are surely bound by the rules of sound reasoning to conclude, that either in the one case or in the other, or in both, it was not the idea of Newton

alone that suggested the ideas, but the idea of Newton and the state of the mind together. There is evidently a *compound* cause, and the effect should be ascribed to both parts of the compound. In reality, the idea of Newton is merely a part of the state of the mind.

Such are some of the consequences of the prevailing doctrine,—that ideas suggest each other according to the various relations among their *objects*;—but if we take into view the still more extensive doctrine, that they suggest each other not only according to the relations of their *objects*, but likewise according to those of the circumstances connected with them, we shall be led to conclusions which, if possible, are still more extraordinary.

But why not look to the relations among *ideas themselves*? The probability surely is, that, as our ideas are purely mental, the laws which regulate their suggestion are mental likewise, and to be found not among things *outward*, but among things *inward*. At any rate, the relations among our ideas themselves should be examined with the most careful attention.

## SECT. II.

### *Law of Precedence, with its principal Consequences.*

Since every endeavour hitherto made to ascertain the laws of Association has failed, it perhaps may be thought that the subject is beyond the reach of the human faculties, and should be abandoned in despair. But in philosophy, despair should never be indulged in. Much better give a wrong solution of phenomena,



than attempt no solution at all. A wrong solution may ultimately lead to a right one; but to attempt nothing, is to relinquish every chance of success. The following law, I imagine, if fairly explained, is sufficient to account for all the phenomena which association presents.

*One idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately preceding it.*

This law I shall take the liberty to call *The Law of Precedence*; and remark, in explanation, that I use the word *power*, in the same sense in which it is commonly used in physical inquiries. When fire is said to have *power* to consume wood, or one moving body to have *power* to move other bodies, it is well known that nothing more is meant by the word *power*, than constant priority in the order of succession. Fire is said to have power to consume wood, because if wood be thrown into the fire, its consumption will follow, and one moving body is said to have power to move others, because if it come into contact with them, their motion will follow. I employ the word *power*, in the very same acceptation, and by an idea's having power to suggest another, mean no more than that when the first occurs, the other, if nothing interfere, will occur also.

I may likewise remark, that I consider those ideas as the same which exactly *resemble* one another. Strictly speaking, an idea cannot acquire power to suggest another, for both ideas pass very soon out of the mind, and when once out, they are gone for ever, and it is only *resembling* ideas that afterwards present themselves. The common use of language, how-



ever, warrants the phraseology I have adopted ; for, by authors of all descriptions, ideas which exactly *resemble* one another, are spoken of as *the same*. To style them similar ideas, though apparently more correct, is not so precise, for things are often styled similar, when their resemblance is far from being complete. Mankind may all be said to be similar to one another, and yet there are very great differences among mankind.

In examining the operations of nature, there are two things to be particularly attended to,—the principles to which the operations are referred should really exist, and they should be sufficient to account for the phenomena which they profess to explain. If they want either of these properties, they are not to be regarded as the principles by which the operations are regulated.

The principle which I have styled *the Law of Precedence*, is allowed by every one to exist. Even those who contend that the laws of Association are innumerable, are ready to admit that this, at least, is one of the number. Some may suppose that the first idea will acquire power to suggest the second, by preceding it only once, while others may imagine that it must precede it several times before the suggesting power is acquired ; but all either tacitly or expressly allow, that, sooner or later, it will acquire suggesting power.

That a degree of suggesting power is acquired, at once appears, on many accounts, the most probable opinion : For if an idea acquire power to suggest another by preceding it, it seems very unlikely that it should not acquire a portion of this power the *first*

*time*, as well as the *second* or *third*, or any *subsequent time*. Instances, too, are continually occurring, where a degree of suggesting power seems evidently to be acquired at once. If a child once approach the fire and burn itself, it will be very cautious how it approach it afterwards. But the most decisive argument is, that all the phenomena may be easily accounted for by the supposition that a degree of suggesting power is acquired at once, and it is encumbering the subject therefore with needless difficulties, to resort to any other supposition. The following are the principal consequences of the law of precedence :—

*First*, If one idea acquire power to suggest another by immediately preceding it, the greater the number of ideas that it immediately precedes, the greater the *number* it will acquire the power of suggesting. This is an obvious consequence ; for if an idea, by immediately preceding another, acquire power to suggest that other, by immediately preceding a second, it must equally acquire power to suggest the second, by immediately preceding a third, to suggest the third, and so on.

The power of one idea to suggest a number of others, is often exemplified. In trying to recollect a number of particulars imperfectly fixed in the memory, how frequently does it happen, that after turning our attention to every quarter, and finding ourselves unsuccessful, the occurrence of some trivial circumstance that was altogether unexpected, brings the whole to our view in a moment.

It thus appears, that the suggesting influence of *association* is materially different from that of *organ-*



*ic impressions.* The same organic impression always gives rise to the same idea. An impression that suggests a sensation of *heat*, always suggests a sensation of heat. An impression that suggests a sensation of *sweetness*, always suggests a sensation of *sweetness*, and so with regard to every other impression. But this is by no means the case with association. By virtue of association, an idea may sometimes suggest one kind of idea, and sometimes another, totally different. Sometimes it may suggest a single idea, and sometimes a great multitude. In short, there is no kind or number of ideas which, in consequence of association, an idea may not acquire the power of suggesting.

*Second,* If one idea acquire power to suggest others by immediately preceding them, the more *frequently* it precedes them, the *greater power* must it acquire to suggest them. This consequence is as obvious as the former. The first time an idea precedes others, it acquires by doing so a certain degree of suggesting power, and this power must continue for some time, else it could not be said to be *acquired*. The next time it precedes them, it acquires an equal degree of power, and this, added to the former, doubles it; the third time, another addition is made, and triples it, and so on.

This, as I remarked in the Introduction, is very analogous to certain well-known phenomena of matter. A body, by falling one second of time, acquires a certain velocity; by falling another second, its velocity is doubled; the third second triples it, and so on. This accelerated velocity of falling bodies, as natural



philosophers well know, is not owing to any distinct law of matter, but is merely a consequence of the law of gravitation. The increasing power of an idea to suggest others by frequently preceding them, is, with equal evidence, not to be imputed to any distinct law of mind, but to be regarded as merely a consequence of the law of precedence.

This consequence, likewise, is often exemplified. The more frequently we repeat any train of ideas, the more readily, as every one knows, does the first, when it afterwards recurs, suggest the second, the second the third, and so on, to the end of the train. The phenomena of repetition form as interesting a subject of inquiry as any in mental science; and the law of precedence accounts for them in a way the most simple and satisfactory.

From this consequence it follows, that the power of an idea to suggest others, may be exceedingly various. Sometimes it may be able to suggest them with that degree of power which is acquired by preceding them only once. At other times it may be able to suggest them with that degree which is acquired by preceding them ten times; and at others, with that degree which is acquired by preceding them an hundred, or a still greater number of times. Several phenomena may be explained on this principle.

1. When we meet with a person whom we have formerly seen only in one particular place, there is usually recalled to our recollection a very distinct idea of that place; but when we meet with a person whom we have seen in a great many different places, there is seldom recalled an idea of any of them. We in-

stantly address him as an acquaintance, without ever thinking of the places where we may have seen him, except perhaps having the vague notion that we have frequently seen him. These facts may be explained thus :—

The sight of a person in any particular place is conjoined in our minds with the idea of that place, and with many other ideas ; for it is impossible to see a person without having many ideas besides that of the place where we see him. Of course, when we afterwards meet with the person, the sight of him will as readily recall the idea of the place, as any of these other ideas, having been connected with each only once. But when we have seen a person in a great number of different places, though the sight of him may have been as frequently conjoined with ideas of all the places, as with any other ideas ; yet it can hardly have been so frequently conjoined with the idea of any one place. It will consequently suggest some of those ideas, in preference to that of any one place ; and, by doing so, may totally prevent the suggestion of such an idea.

2. When we meet with a person whom we have formerly seen only at one particular time, there is usually recalled to our recollection a very distinct idea of that time ; but when we meet with a person whom we have seen a great number of times, there is seldom recalled any such idea. This case is to be explained exactly as the foregoing.

The sight of a person at any particular time is conjoined in our minds with the idea of that time and with many other ideas,—for it is impossible to see a



person without having many ideas besides that of the time when we see him. Of course, when we afterwards meet with the person, the sight of him will as readily recall the idea of the time as any of those other ideas—having been conjoined with each only once. But when we have seen a person a great number of times, though the sight of him may have been as frequently conjoined with ideas of all the times as with any other ideas, it can hardly have been so frequently conjoined with the idea of any one time. It may consequently suggest some of these ideas in preference to that of any one time, and by doing so may altogether prevent the suggestion of such an idea.

3. In going over a poem which is imperfectly committed to memory, we are far more apt to think of the time and place of its committal than in going over one which we are quite master of. This also is to be explained as above. By frequent repetition, the different ideas contained in the poem acquire greater power to suggest one another than to suggest any extraneous circumstances,—such as those of time and place. They of course suggest one another in preference to any extraneous circumstances, and, by doing so, may totally prevent such suggestions.

*Third,* If an idea acquire power to suggest others by immediately preceding them, the greater the number of ideas that immediately precede any others the greater will be their power, when they all recur, to suggest them. According to the law of Precedence, one idea acquires the power of suggesting others by immediately preceding them, and if another one should immediately precede them, it, of course, will acquire equal power.



Hence, if both afterwards recur at the same time, they will have double the power of one of them, three will have triple the power, four quadruple, and so on.

This consequence is as frequently exemplified as either of the former. In endeavouring to recall any thing to the recollection of another, we try to suggest to him as many of the previous circumstances of the case as possible, and the more of them we can suggest the greater is the probability of his recollection's being excited. In endeavouring to recall any thing to our own recollection, we adopt a similar course. We bring our mind as nearly as possible to the state it was in, immediately prior to the former occurrence of the event. We contemplate as many of the previous circumstances as we can think of; and the more we can think of, the more likely are our researches to be successful.

It may be said, indeed, that in such cases we not only contemplate the *previous* circumstances, but likewise the *coexisting* and *subsequent* ones, and we certainly do so; but this in no degree invalidates the doctrine I have stated, provided my remarks be allowed to be correct *so far as they go*. The reason of our contemplating coexisting and subsequent circumstances will afterwards appear.

It follows from this consequence, that ideas may be greatly aided in their suggesting power by others which coexist with them. I take up a newspaper, and find it mentioned that coals at such a *pit* are at such a price; and immediately the idea of the word *pit* is accompanied with the idea of a *coal mine*. Some time afterwards I take up a play bill, and find it mentioned that admission to the boxes is such a

price, and admission to the *pit* such another ; and immediately the idea of the word *pit* is accompanied with the idea of a particular part of a *theatre*. How comes the same idea to be followed by so dissimilar results ? It is plainly because of the ideas which co-exist with it. In the first case there coexisted with the idea of the word *pit* ideas of the other words with which it was connected, the idea of coals and of many other circumstances ; and it was not the idea of the word *pit* alone that suggested the idea of the coal-mine, but the idea of the word *pit*, and the other ideas in conjunction. The idea of the word *pit* may have had the greatest share of influence, but it was aided by coexisting ones. In the second case, along with the idea of the word *pit*, there were likewise ideas of other words and of other circumstances ; and it was the whole aggregate of ideas, and not any one of them, that suggested the idea of a particular part of a theatre, although one of them may have had the principal share of influence.

It was formerly remarked, that when the idea of Sir Isaac Newton occurs to us, it may sometimes be accompanied with one idea, and sometimes with another totally different. The reason is now manifest. It is affected by coexisting ideas, and it is these that philosophers should mention when they tell us that the idea of Newton sometimes suggests one idea and sometimes another, according to the different states of the mind. The states of the mind are nothing but the various sensations, conceptions, emotions, affections, passions, &c. of which we are conscious. All such phenomena, in questions respecting association, go under



the name of ideas ; and it is on account of the co-operating influence of these that any particular idea is sometimes followed by one result, and sometimes by a different.

But the suggesting power of an idea may not only be aided by coexisting ones ; it may also be counteracted by them. If an idea have less power to suggest a second than certain coexisting ideas have to suggest a third or a fourth, the third or the fourth may be suggested in preference to the second, and may totally prevent the suggestion of the second. This frequently happens. While engaged in some interesting pursuit, a particular idea presents itself to my mind, and yet fails to suggest its wonted associates ; and the reason obviously is, that I am so much occupied with the pursuit in which I am engaged, that the influence of the idea is counteracted. Even the common people explain the case in this way, and talk of the mind's being too much taken up with its present thoughts to be drawn aside by what is extraneous.

*Fourth,* If an idea acquire power to suggest another by immediately preceding it, the more *vivid* the idea is that precedes any other, the greater will be its power, when it recurs in a state equally vivid, to suggest it. According to the law of Precedence, an idea of any degree of vividness acquires power to suggest another, and of course another equal degree of vividness will acquire an equal degree of power, so that both together will have double the power of one of them, three will have triple the power, four quadruple, and so on. Or to state the matter thus :—

When an idea is said to acquire power to suggest



another by immediately preceding it, the meaning, as I formerly remarked, is, that the occurrence of an idea *similar* to the first will be followed by the occurrence of an idea *similar* to the second. It is really on the principle of *resemblance* that the suggestion proceeds, and the more numerous the degrees of vividness possessed by two similar ideas, the more numerous, of course, are the points in which they *resemble*, and, consequently, the greater should be their suggesting power.

Many instances of this consequence might be mentioned. Sensations, perceptions, and all other vivid ideas, are universally acknowledged to have more suggesting power than faint ideas. The *sight* of an interesting scene, for example, is always productive of more powerful effects than the bare thought of it at a distance.

The law of Precedence, in short, though in the highest degree simple, yet leads to results of a nature the most important. It lies at the foundation, as we shall afterwards see, of all perception, of all memory, and, in fact, of all the *acquirements*, whether intellectual, active, or moral, which it is possible for us to obtain. By means of it, too, (along with another principle, which I shall afterwards illustrate,) we are enabled to regulate the suggestion of our ideas in some measure at our pleasure. If we wish to secure the recurrence of a particular idea, (and it is often of the last importance that we should do so,) we have merely to connect it with those that are habitually present—(and some ideas are almost always present, the idea of our own persons, for example)—render them all as vivid as pos-

sible, and frequently repeat them, and our object will be accomplished. If we wish to prevent the recurrence of a particular idea,—and this, too, is often of importance,—we have merely to pass it unheeded, and it will seldom again trouble us. The obvious tendency, in short, of the law of Association, is not only to make things which we have formerly experienced *recur* to our thoughts, but to recur in proportion to the interest we take in them, and as it is desirable they should recur.

Stewart remarks, that the relations upon which some of our associations are founded are perfectly obvious to the mind, while those which are the foundation of others are discovered only in consequence of particular efforts of attention. “Of the former kind,” he says, “are the relations of resemblance and analogy, of contrariety, of vicinity in time and place, and those which arise from accidental coincidences in the sound of different words. These, in general, connect our thoughts together, when they are suffered to take their natural course, and when we are conscious of little or no active exertion. Of the latter kind are the relations of cause and effect, of means and an end, of premises and a conclusion, and those others which regulate the train of thought in the mind of the philosopher, when he is engaged in a particular investigation.” Nothing can be more simple than the explanation of these facts by the law of Precedence. In our ordinary state of mind ideas most readily suggest each other according to their more obvious relations, as these are the relations under which, in such a state of mind, they are most *commonly* contemplated : and in a phi-



losophical state of mind, they most readily suggest each other according to their philosophical relations, for the very same reason. These are the relations under which, in such a state of mind, we most commonly contemplate them.

The power which ideas acquire to suggest one another does not remain stationary, but gradually becomes weaker and weaker, from the time of its acquisition, till at last it finally expires. This is well stated by Locke, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. "Many of those ideas," says this eminent writer, "which were produced in the minds of children in the beginning of their sensation, (some of which, perhaps, as of some pleasures and pains, were before they were born, and others in their infancy,) if, in the future course of their lives, they are not repeated again, are quite lost, without the least glimpse remaining of them. This may be observed in those who, by some mischance, have lost their sight when they were very young, in whom the ideas of colours having been but slightly taken notice of, and ceasing to be repeated, do quite wear out, so that some years after there is no more notion nor memory of colours left in their minds than in those of people born blind. The memory in some men, it is true, is very tenacious, even to a miracle; but yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those which are struck deepest, and in minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exercise of the senses, or reflection on those kinds of objects which at first occasioned them, the print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen. Thus the ideas, as well



as children of our youth, often die before us ; and our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching, where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. The pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and if not sometimes refreshed, evanish and disappear. How much the constitution of our bodies, and the make of our animal spirits, are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain make this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like freestone, and in others little better than sand, I shall not here inquire ; though it may seem probable that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory, since we oftentimes find a disease quite strip the mind of all its ideas, and the flames of a fever in a few days calcine all those images to dust and confusion, which seemed to be as lasting as if graved on marble."

Some of the facts which Locke here refers to seem capable of being explained on a different principle from that of the gradual decay of the suggesting power of ideas ; but without this principle others cannot be explained at all. Indeed, it is no more astonishing that time should weaken the suggesting power of ideas, than that it should weaken any other power belonging to us. Every talent possessed by man, whether bodily or mental, whether original or acquired, is liable to be impaired by time ; and the decay of the suggesting power of ideas merely shows that their influence is subject to the fate of every thing human.

The law of Precedence is quite compatible with great

constitutional diversities among mankind, in reference to Association. That some people have a much greater facility in associating ideas than others, is indubitable. Even in the tenderest infancy we witness such diversities, and, in advancing years, instead of diminishing, they seem rather to increase. The same individual, too, is often different from himself, in respect of Association, at different times, so that from the habits of *the boy* we can hardly ever conclude respecting the character of *the man*. In the course of the same day, indeed, the associating influence of the mind seems liable to considerable fluctuations. Few people can commit things to memory in the evening so easily as in the morning, or after a full meal so easily as before it. But all these, and many other diversities, far from being inconsistent with the law of precedence, only present to us the various circumstances in which it operates. Unless it can be shown that there are persons so constituted, that, in their minds, ideas which precede others do not acquire power to suggest them, the law of precedence must be considered as holding universally.

### SECT. III.

#### *Relation of Succession.*

Hume, as every one knows, considered *contiguity in point of time* as a branch of one of his laws of Association; but, instead of a branch of *one law*, it is, in reality, itself *three laws*. In the sense in which Hume understands the phrase, *contiguity in point of time*, he means, that an idea will acquire power to



suggest another by *immediately preceding it*, by existing *at the same time* with it, and by *immediately following it*. But here are three laws, perfectly distinct from one another, and which lead to perfectly distinct consequences. Nothing is more common than for philosophers to overlook the import of the language they make use of, and to represent those things as *one*, which have no other unity than that they are all expressed by *one term*.

The first law included in Hume's contiguity in point of time, is the law of *Precedence*, already mentioned. The second is founded on the relation of *Co-existence*, which I shall examine in the next section; and the third is founded on the relation of *Succession*, which I shall examine at present.

1. Let a child that is unacquainted with the alphabet be made to repeat the sounds of the letters in the direct order, and they will gradually become so associated with each other, that it will be able to go over them without any trouble. Now, according to the laws above mentioned, in what order should it be able to go over them? According to the law, that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *preceding it*, as the sound of A in the repetition immediately preceded the sound of B, the sound of B the sound of C, and so on, in the direct order, the sound of A, when it afterwards occurs, should suggest the sound of B, the sound of B the sound of C, and so on; and the child should be able to go over the sounds in the direct order. But as the sound of Z, in the repetition, did not precede the sound of Y, nor the sound of Y the sound of X, and so on inversely, the child should be to-



tally unable to go over the sounds in the inverse order. According to the law, that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *succeeding it*, as the sound of Z in the repetition immediately succeeded the sound of Y, the sound of Y the sound of X, and so on, the sound of Z, when it afterwards occurs, should suggest the sound of Y, the sound of Y the sound of X, and so on, and the child should be able to go over the sounds in the inverse order. But as the sound of A did not succeed the sound of B, nor the sound of B the sound of C, and so on, the child should be totally unable to go over the sounds in the direct order. According to Hume's *contiguity in point of time*, which includes both laws, and likewise that of *coexistence*, the child should be able to go over the letters with equal facility both ways. It is almost unnecessary to mention what would be the actual result of such an experiment. Every one knows that the child would be able to go over the letters in the direct order, but altogether unable to go over them in the reverse.

By putting, indeed, the sound of Z *before* the sound of Y, and the sound of Y *before* the sound of X, and so on, the child may soon learn to go over the letters in the reverse order, but this is not contrary to the law of precedence, but an instance of it.

The child, too, for its own amusement, after learning the letters in the direct order, may try to go over them in the reverse,—and children not unfrequently resort to such amusement;—but though it ultimately succeed, it will be found to do so in a way that is perfectly consistent with the law I have mentioned.

Its mode of proceeding is this: It begins with the sound of Z, and, finding that the sound of Y does not readily occur, it pitches on some other sound that may happen to occur,—the sound of M, for example,—goes on from M in the direct order till it come to Y, fixes the sound of Y in its mind immediately after the sound of Z, and proceeds in the same way to the next letter. But neither is there here any contradiction to the law of precedence, but merely a laborious way of putting Z before Y, Y before X, and so on, and falls under the law of precedence as much as the former case.

2. In teaching Latin, the usual practice, after the elements are acquired, is to exercise the learner for some time in turning Latin into English. The Latin words are first pointed out to him, and then the English ones which correspond to them. The Latin words, of course, in general precede the English, although it must sometimes happen that the English words will precede the Latin, or coexist with them, particularly when the words are of very frequent occurrence. According to the law, that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *preceding it*, it should be easier for the learner to turn Latin into English than the contrary, although, the English words having sometimes preceded the Latin, or coexisted with them, it should be easier for him to turn English into Latin than a person who has not learned Latin at all. According to the law, that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *succeeding it*, it should be easier for him to turn English into Latin than Latin into English. And according to the doctrine

of *contiguity in point of time*, which includes both laws, and likewise that of *coexistence*, he should find it equally easy to translate either way. The actual result is, that he finds it much easier to translate Latin into English than English into Latin.

3. In travelling along a road to which we are unaccustomed, though the objects presented to us are observed in succession, yet the contiguous parts of the succession always coexist in our view for some time. According to the law that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *preceding it*, we should afterwards have less difficulty in going over the objects in our thoughts in the *original* order, than in the *reverse*. According to the law that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *succeeding it*, we should have less difficulty in going over them in the *reverse* order than in the *original* one. And according to the doctrine of *contiguity in point of time*, which includes both laws, and likewise that of *coexistence*, we should find it equally easy to go over them either way. The actual result is, that we find it easiest to go over them in the original order, although we can likewise go over them in the reverse. Our ability to do the latter, as will afterwards appear, is owing to the contiguous parts of the succession's having coexisted in our view for some time.

It hence happens, that in travelling along a road to which we are little accustomed, we have less difficulty in finding our way when travelling in the *same direction* we have done before, than when travelling in the *opposite*. This is particularly discernible in cases where the road is somewhat intricate, as in passing along the



confused streets of a large city. Every person must feel that he has less difficulty in discovering his way among a number of intricate streets,\* when going in the same direction he may have done formerly, than in retracing his steps, and going in the contrary direction.

4. The following example, where the ideas are hardly ever presented but in the direct order, is as fair an instance as I can think of. Let a person who knows nothing of written music be made to learn a tune by the ear, and as the whole beauty and effect of the tune depend on his repeating the notes in the direct order, he will never dream of repeating them in any other. According to the law that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *preceding it*, he should be able to go over the notes in the direct order, but not in the reverse. According to the law that an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately *succeeding it*, he should be able to go over them in the reverse, but not in the direct. And according to the doctrine of *contiguity in point of time*, which includes both laws, and likewise that of coexistence, he should be able to go over them, with equal facility, both ways. It is almost unnecessary to mention what would be the actual result. Every one knows that he would be able to go over them only in the direct order, and be almost as unable to go over them in the reverse as if he had never heard them at all.

\* I do not mean, however, to ascribe the whole of the effect to the circumstance here stated. When we retrace our steps, the objects are seen under a different aspect.

I cannot help regarding these instances as quite decisive of the point at issue, and as proving incontestably, that ideas do not acquire power to suggest others by *immediately succeeding* them.

It must be observed, however, that though ideas do not acquire power to suggest others by immediately succeeding them, yet ideas whose objects succeed the objects of others, may acquire power to suggest them. If a person, for example, tell us of a succession of objects, and, beginning with the last of the succession, proceed in the inverse order to the first, the idea of the last object will acquire power to suggest the idea of the last but one, the idea of the last but one the idea of the last but two, and so on. It is quite unnecessary, however, to point out the conformity of this case to the law of precedence, as every one must see it at first sight.

#### SECT. IV.

##### *Relation of Coexistence.*

The third law included in Hume's contiguity in point of time, is founded on the relation of *coexistence*; and there cannot be a doubt of the fact itself, that coexisting ideas *do* acquire power to suggest one another. Last week I was in company with two zealous metaphysicians, and heard them discussing, with great eagerness, the principles of their mysterious science. This week I was in company with one of them, and his appearance instantly suggested an idea of the other. Cases of this nature are occurring incessantly, and the only question, therefore, is, does the sugges-



tion take place in consequence of the relation of *co-existence*, or in consequence of the *law of precedence*? This question, I apprehend, may be easily answered.

It was formerly remarked, that there is some portion of time which is the smallest the mind is capable of perceiving, and that this portion may be properly enough styled a *sensible point*. Now, should two ideas coexist for only *one* such point, it could not be said, I imagine, with any propriety, that either of them preceded the other. But let them coexist for *two*, (and all coexisting ideas that obtain any notice co-exist much longer,) and nothing can be more evident than that each of them precedes the other in the different points of their existence: Thus,

Let A and B be two ideas which coexist for *two sensible points of time*: Then A, while existing in the first point, precedes B, while B is existing in the second, and B, while existing in the first point, precedes A, while A is existing in the second: or to put the matter in a different light—

Were A to exist *alone* in the first point, and B *alone* in the second, then A would be the antecedent idea, and B the consequent one; and were B to exist *alone* in the first point, and A *alone* in the second, then B would be the antecedent idea, and A the consequent one. Now A and B's existing in conjunction, does not prevent A from being the antecedent of B, nor B from being the antecedent of A, and each of them, therefore, as already remarked, must be considered as the antecedent of the other in the different points of their existence.

Were A and B to coexist, not for *two* points of



time, but for *three* or *four* or more points, then A in the first point would precede B in the second, A in the second would precede B in the third, A in the third would precede B in the fourth, and so on. In like manner, B in the first point would precede A in the second, B in the second would precede A in the third, B in the third would precede A in the fourth, and so on: And except, therefore, in cases where ideas co-exist for only one point of time, (and ideas whose co-existence is so evanescent never obtain any notice,) they must always be considered as preceding each other in the different points of their existence: and the law of precedence, of course, if well founded, must occasion the *mutual suggestion* of such ideas. All the phenomena exactly accord with this conclusion.

One consequence of the law of precedence is, that the greater number of ideas which any other precedes, the greater the number does it acquire the power of suggesting. And every one knows, that the greater the number of ideas that *coexist* with any other, the greater the number,—other things being equal,—are afterwards suggested by it. If *two* objects are seen at the same time, and afterwards only one of them, the sight of the one is almost sure to suggest an idea of the other. If *three* objects are seen at the same time, and afterwards only one of them, the sight of the one is almost sure to suggest an idea of the other two, and so on.

Another consequence of the law of precedence is, that the more frequently an idea precedes any others, the greater power does it acquire to suggest them. This consequence is no less applicable to the relation of coexistence than the former. Let A and B, two

ideas, coexist in the mind, not for *two* points of time, but for *three*, or *four*, or *more points*; then, as was already shown, A in the first point precedes B in the second, A in the second precedes B in the third, A in the third precedes B in the fourth, and so on. In other words, the greater the number of points during which A and B coexist, the more frequently does A precede B, and if A acquire the power of suggesting B by virtue of the law of precedence, the greater should be A's power of suggesting B. In like manner, B in the first point precedes A in the second, B in the second precedes A in the third, B in the third precedes A in the fourth, and so on. In other words, the greater the number of points during which A and B coexist, the more frequently does B precede A; and if B acquire the power of suggesting A by virtue of the law of precedence, the greater should be B's power of suggesting A. It follows that, if coexisting ideas acquire power to suggest each other by virtue of the law of precedence, the longer they coexist, the more readily will the suggestion take place. The actual phenomena are perfectly agreeable to this conclusion. When we look for a *considerable while* at two objects, the sight of the one more readily suggests an idea of the other, than when we obtain only a transient glance of them.

A third consequence of the law of precedence is, that the greater the number of ideas that precede any others, the greater is their power when they all recur in conjunction to suggest these others. This consequence, likewise, is very agreeable to the relation of co-existence. Instead of A and B, (two coexisting ideas)

let there be three, A, B, and C, and to simplify the illustration, let us suppose them to coexist for only two points of time. Then both A and B while in the first point precede C, while C is in the second, both A and C while in the first point precede B, while B is in the second, and both B and C while in the first point precede A, while A is in the second. Hence, if A and B acquire the power of suggesting C by virtue of the law of precedence, A and B, when they recur together, must have greater power to suggest C, than if only one of them had recurred. In like manner, A and C, when they recur together, will have greater power to suggest B, than if only one of them had recurred, and B and C together, greater power to suggest A, than if only one of them had recurred.

If, instead of three coexisting ideas, we suppose *four*, or *five*, or a *greater number*, an exactly similar conclusion may be drawn. In all cases it will be found, that if coexisting ideas suggest each other by virtue of the law of precedence, the greater the number of ideas that coexist with any others, the greater the power,—other things being equal,—when they recur, will they have to suggest these others. Nothing can be more agreeable to the real phenomena. When we observe at the same time a number of objects, the more of them we afterwards observe, the more readily are ideas of the remainder obtained. If yesterday we observed four objects, and to-day three of them, the idea of the fourth will more readily occur, than if to-day we had observed only one.

It also deserves notice, that a number of ideas which



have formerly coexisted, are more easily *retained* in the mind, than an individual idea. This, too, is exactly what should happen, if the law of precedence regulate their suggestion; for, as the ideas have formerly coexisted, they must have acquired power to suggest each other, and, being already in the mind, the exercise of such a power can have no other tendency than to make them continue, and consequently to make them be the more easily retained by any influence exerted by the mind itself.

We may fairly infer, indeed, from the law of precedence, that a number of ideas, whether they have *formerly* coexisted or not, will be more easily *retained* than an individual one. For, suppose them to coexist for only two points of time,—and it almost always happens that co-existing ideas continue longer,—in that period, as every one of them has preceded every other one, they must all have acquired power to suggest each other; and being already in the mind, the influence of such a power, exactly as in the former case, must have a tendency to make them continue, and of course to make them be the more easily retained. It happens, I believe, in reality, that a number of ideas are more easily retained in the mind than a single one. The fact is somewhere noticed by Stewart, and it perfectly accords with the general doctrine respecting Association which I have stated.

The last consequence of the law of precedence is, that the more vivid any idea is that precedes any others, the greater power does it possess, when it recurs in a state equally vivid to suggest them. It is almost unnecessary to remark how exactly this agrees

with the relation of coexistence. The *perception* of an object which we have formerly *seen* at the same time with others, has almost always a greater tendency to recall these others than a faint conception has.

Perhaps, however, some may imagine that it would be as easy to reduce the law of precedence under the relation of co-existence, as the relation of co-existence under the law of precedence, and that therefore foregoing reasoning is not to be trusted; but least reflection will satisfy us that this cannot be done, and that the relation of precedence is really governing relation. When a child, for instance, learning to repeat the letters of the alphabet in direct order, it is manifest that the sound of A *coexists* in its mind as long with the sound of B as the sound of B with the sound of A; and the sound of B as long with the sound of C as the sound of C with the sound of B, and so with all the other letters to the end. Hence, if ideas suggest each other according to the relation of *coexistence*, the child must be as able to go over the letters in the *reverse* order as in the *direct*;—contrary to what every one knows to be the fact.

So with a person who has learned a tune by ear. The relation of *coexistence* between any two contiguous notes of the tune, is precisely the same whether we view them in the direct order or the reverse; and consequently if they suggest each other in virtue of the relation of *coexistence*, the person must be as able to go over them in the reverse order as in the direct. But every one knows that he could do no such thing; and, in fact, that he could not go on



them in the reverse order at all. While the relation of *coexistence*, therefore, may be easily brought under the *law of precedence*, it is impossible to bring the law of precedence under the relation of coexistence, and consequently this law must be held as the governing one.

It was formerly remarked, that when a number of objects are successively presented to us in such a way that a few of the contiguous ones coexist for some time in our view, as in the case of objects which we witness while travelling along a road, we can afterwards more easily think over them in the direct order than in the reverse, though we can also think over them in this latter order. The influence of the law of precedence in such a case must now be quite evident. It is here indeed exemplified with particular clearness, for we not only see it suggesting ideas, but suggesting them in two different ways, with that *exact degree of comparative facility* which the nature of the case demands. The balance is clearly in favour of the direct order, and this is found to be the very order in which we can most readily go over them.

It was also formerly remarked, that in trying to recollect what is imperfectly committed to memory, we often turn our attention not only to the previous circumstances, but also to the coexisting and subsequent ones. The reason is, the coexisting ideas have a *virtual precedence* involved in their coexistence, and the subsequent ideas may either have coexisted for some time with what we wish to recollect, or may be connected with it by the relation of coexistence through the *intervention of others*.



Philosophers contend that ideas suggest each other by virtue of relations subsisting among their *objects*, and that ideas whose objects coexist have the power of mutual suggestion. Strange though this doctrine at first sight seems, there are many phenomena that appear to establish it. Yesterday morning a friend entered my room, and told me of an event which, he said, took place on the *first day of last year at noon*, and his information gave me a very distinct idea of it. To-day in the morning the same friend entered my room, and told me of another event entirely different from the former, which, he also said, took place on the *first day of last year at noon*, and I obtained a very distinct idea of this event likewise. But not only did I obtain a distinct idea of this *second event*, there was immediately suggested to me a distinct idea of the *first one*.

Now here say philosophers,—at least their doctrine would lead them to say so,—are two events which took place at *the same time* more than a year ago. An idea of the one was obtained yesterday morning, but no idea of the other; this morning an idea of the other was obtained, and it instantly suggested an idea of the first one. In this case, too, the suggesting idea instead of *preceding* the one suggested, actually *succeeded* it, and succeeded it after the interval of a whole day. The ideas likewise were completely different from each other, and had no other connexion but that the events to which they referred took place at the same time. Here then is an idea suggesting another not by virtue of the law of precedence, nor by virtue of any relation among the ideas themselves at

all, but by virtue of the relation of coexistence among other *objects*.

That the *objects* of our ideas possess power to regulate their suggestion is certainly a most extraordinary doctrine. These objects, as in the case before us, may be events which are long ago past; and after they and their relations are extinct for ever, that they should have power to control the suggestion of our ideas, is certainly a circumstance which *a priori* could not have been expected. Besides, the objects of our ideas may be future events. A person may tell me to-day of an event which will take place on the *first day of next year at noon*; to-morrow he may tell me of a different event which will take place at *the same* period, and his statement of to-morrow will suggest to my mind his statement of to-day as completely as in the case already mentioned. The suggestion of our ideas, therefore, may be regulated by events and relations which are yet in the womb of futurity; by entities which have no existence at the time their influence is exerted, and which never yet have had any existence. But what renders the case still more astonishing is, that the events and their relations may never have any existence at all. My informant in both cases may be mistaken. The events which he mentions may never have taken place nor ever will take place; and yet, if philosophers are to be credited, these mere nonentities, these absolute nullities, have as great influence to control the suggestion of my ideas as if they were present and actual realities.

The phenomena which have given rise to so extra-

ordinary a doctrine, are as easily explained as any in mental science. When my informant yesterday morning told me of the event, which, he said, took place on the *first day of last year at noon*, I not only obtained an idea of the event, but along with it an idea of the time at which he said it happened. This morning when he informed me of the other event, which, he said, took place on the first day of last year at noon, I likewise obtained an idea of the event, and an idea of the time at which he said it happened; that is, I obtained an idea which *coexisted* with that of the first mentioned event. If it operate according to the law of precedence, it should suggest an idea of the first mentioned event. It actually does so, and confirms the law.

All the consequences, too, of the law of precedence, in as far as they have any concern with the phenomena, exactly accord with them. Had my informant yesterday morning told me of *two* events which took place on the first day of last year at noon, I had obtained this morning ideas of *both*. Had he informed me of three events, I had obtained this morning ideas of *three*, and so on. In other words, the greater the number of events I was yesterday informed of, the greater the number I should this day have obtained ideas of.

Had my informant yesterday morning *frequently repeated* his information respecting the event which took place on the first day of last year at noon; this morning when I obtained an idea of the first day of last year at noon, the idea of the event had more



readily recurred to me than if I had been informed of it only once.

Had any circumstances yesterday occurred to render the idea of the first day of last year at noon particularly *interesting* or *vivid*, and had the same circumstances occurred to-day, the idea of the event which I was informed of yesterday had more readily occurred to-day than if there had been nothing interesting.

There is not, therefore, the slightest reason to believe that the relation of coexistence among the *objects* of our ideas has any influence in regulating their suggesting. In all the cases where it is supposed to have influence, it will be found that there is some idea or number of ideas which serve as *connecting media*, and that it is these, operating according to the law of precedence, that produce the result.

To avoid every semblance of unfairness, I have adverted in the above example only to the idea of the *time* when both events took place; but in reality, there were a great many other co-existing ideas. When my informant yesterday told me of the event which took place on the *first day of last year at noon*, I must have heard the sound of his voice, and had ideas of the words *on the first day of last year at noon*; and the sound of his voice and the ideas of these words must have coexisted with the idea of the event, or rather must have preceded it. To-day when he told me of the other event which took place on the first day of last year at noon, I must likewise have heard the sound of his voice, and had ideas of the words *on the first day of last year at noon*. Here then are a

number of ideas which coexisted with that of the first mentioned event, or rather which preceded it ; and according to the law of precedence, their suggesting the idea of that event is precisely what should happen. In both cases, too, I must have had some idea of my informant, some idea of myself, some idea of the place where the information was given, and perhaps of many other circumstances. All these ideas coexisted with that of the first mentioned event, and when they recurred with that of the second, it is perfectly conformable to the law of precedence that they should suggest an idea of the first mentioned event.

The greater the number of ideas too which coexisted with that of the first mentioned event and recurred with that of the second, the more readily would the idea of the first mentioned event be suggested. When it is stated, that the *same* person informed me of the two events, that he gave me the information as nearly as possible in the *same* form of words, that he gave me it at the *same* time of the respective days, and gave it in the *same* apartment, every person will allow that on the second day I was more likely to obtain an idea of the event mentioned on the first than if the circumstances had been reversed. Had the information been given by *different* persons, in words as *different* as possible, at *different* hours of the respective days, and in *different* places, no one acquainted with human nature would suppose that I could have obtained an idea of the event so readily as in the circumstances I have stated. If the suggestion be effected by the law of precedence, this is the very result that should take place ; for, according to this

law, the greater the number of ideas that precede,—or coexist with,—any others, the greater power do they possess when they all recur to suggest these others.

The phenomena, therefore, far from leading to the marvellous conclusion, that events which existed more than a year ago, or which shall exist more than a year hence ; or that events which never had and never will have any existence at all, may control our ideas, come all very exactly under the law of precedence, and extend our views of its influence. The following consequences result from the doctrine now stated concerning coexistence.

1. The *longer* an idea continues in the mind, the more readily will it afterwards recur. When an idea enters the mind, the other ideas which are present must either continue as long as it does, (perhaps they may continue longer,) or they must vanish before it, or some of them must continue as long as it does, and the rest vanish before it. If they continue as long as it does, then the longer it continues the longer they continue, and the greater power do they acquire to suggest it. If they vanish before it, they must be succeeded by others ; if these too vanish, they must be succeeded by others, and so on ; that is, the longer it continues, the greater the number of ideas successively acquire power to suggest it. If some of them continue as long as it does and the rest vanish, then those which continue must have their suggesting power increased ; the rest when they vanish will be succeeded by others, these by others, and so on ; that is, the longer it continues the greater the number of



ideas successively acquire power to suggest it. In either of these cases, the probability of its being afterwards suggested is evidently augmented.

2. The more *frequently* an idea has occurred, the more readily will it afterwards occur. When an idea frequently enters the mind, it must be accompanied each time with the same ideas or with different ones, or partly with the same, and partly with different ones. If it be accompanied each time with the same ideas, then the more frequently it occurs, the more frequently they occur, and the greater power do they acquire to suggest it. If it be accompanied with different ones, then the more frequently it occurs the greater the number of these different ones occur and acquire power to suggest it. If it be accompanied partly with the same and partly with different ones, then the more frequently it occurs the greater power do the first kind acquire to suggest it, and the greater the number of the second kind acquire power to suggest it; and in either of these cases, the probability of its future suggestion is augmented.

Both these conclusions are agreeable to experience. We always find that ideas which remain long in the mind are more easily recollected than such as are transient; and likewise that those which occur frequently are more easily recollected than those that occur seldom.

3. The longer an idea continues in the mind the *longer* will it continue when it afterwards recurs. The longer an idea continues, the greater tendency do those which may continue all the time with it acquire to suggest it, and to be suggested by it. Of

course when it afterwards occurs, they too will be apt to occur, and their influence over it can have no other tendency than to make it continue. Again, the longer an idea continues, the greater is the number which before it evanish may successively occur and acquire a tendency to suggest it, and to be suggested by it. Of course, when it afterwards occurs, they too will be apt to occur, and their influence likewise must have a tendency to make it continue.

4. The more frequently an idea has occurred, the *longer* will it continue when it afterwards recurs. For the more frequently an idea has occurred, the greater tendency do those which may have always occurred along with it acquire to suggest it, and to be suggested by it. Of course, when it afterwards occurs, they too will be apt to occur, and their influence over it can have no other tendency than to make it continue. Again, the more frequently an idea has occurred, the greater is the number which before it evanish may have occasionally occurred along with it, and acquired a tendency to suggest it, and to be suggested by it. Of course, when it afterwards occurs, they too will be apt to occur, and their influence over it must have a tendency to make it continue.

These conclusions likewise are agreeable to experience. We always find it easier to detain an idea which has been long in the mind on a former occasion, or which has been repeatedly in the mind, than one with which we are in no degree familiar. Those subjects to which we are accustomed we can think on with ease, while others to which we are not accustomed, though far less obscure and abstract, we can hard-



ly think of at all. The metaphysician can detain and examine the most mysterious questions of mental philosophy, but perhaps could not steadily reflect for two minutes on a plain practical question relating to commerce or agriculture.

In the above observations respecting coexistence, it perhaps may be thought that I have aimed at a degree of precision which is unnecessary, and descended to circumstances too minute to merit attention; but it ought to be remembered that we should reason from the laws of nature with the most rigorous exactness, and that it is only from such reasoning we ever can hope to explain the phenomena. In the Science of Astronomy, a variety of minute circumstances were for a long time disregarded, and the attention of philosophers directed to operations of more prominent importance; and the consequence was, that a number of phenomena could not be accounted for at all, and that some very celebrated philosophers were led to the conclusion, that the laws of the planetary system were defective, and that if the Author of nature did not step forward to amend his imperfect productions, they would ultimately go to ruin from their inherent disorder. One astronomer, I believe, went so far as to foretell the occurrence of this great catastrophe about twenty-five thousand years hence. A more strict application of astronomical principles has entirely dissipated this strange delusion, formed a body of science which we might almost pronounce to be perfect, and shown that, till some miraculous interposition take place, the planetary system will ever maintain its present regularity. In the science



of mind, the great evil to be complained of is want of precision. Philosophers have enumerated a great multitude of what they call faculties or principles; but as they have never described the exact nature of these faculties, the majority of mankind regard their speculations as a mere mass of confusion, calculated rather to bewilder than to enlighten. And if ever this science shall be rescued from its present discredit, and raised to that station which it is entitled to occupy, we may rest assured it will only be by the most rigorous analysis of its phenomena and application of its laws.

## SECT. V.

*Contiguity in point of Place.*

That ideas which are obtained in the *same place* acquire power to suggest each other is indubitable. If a person enter a particular apartment and obtain ideas of two objects, and afterwards enter the same apartment and obtain an idea of one of them, the idea of the other will be instantly suggested. Is the second idea suggested in consequence of the relation of *contiguity in point of place*, or in consequence of the law of precedence?

There is not the slightest reason, I imagine, to impute the suggestion to any other source than the latter principle. The first time the person enters the apartment, he obtains simultaneously ideas of two objects, and according to the doctrine of co-existence explained in the last section, when he afterwards obtains an idea of one of them, the idea of the other should

be suggested. It actually is suggested, and confirms the doctrine.

But as this instance implies coexistence in point of time, as well as contiguity in point of place, it perhaps may be deemed somewhat unfair. I shall therefore give the following. If a person enter a particular apartment, and obtain an idea of an object, and *afterwards* enter the same apartment, and obtain an idea of a different object, the idea of the first one will be suggested. Now here it may be said is an idea suggested by another, not by virtue of the law of precedence, for the suggesting idea does not precede but succeed the one suggested.

The explanation, however, is perfectly evident. The first time the person entered the apartment, he obtained an idea of an object, and also an *idea of the place* where the object was situated,—for he could not perceive the object without perceiving its situation. The second time he entered the apartment, he obtained an idea of a different object, and an idea of the same place; that is, he obtained an idea the same with that which coexisted with the first idea. According to the doctrine of coexistence, it should suggest the first idea, and, in perfect conformity with the doctrine, it does suggest it. It is not therefore the idea of the second object that suggests the idea of the first, but the idea of the place where both objects were situated.

The question, indeed, may be decided by a very simple experiment. Let a person enter an apartment where he perceives a certain object, and afterwards enter the same apartment without perceiving any ob-



ject at all,—let him find the apartment empty,—and yet the idea of the object he perceived the first time will be as readily suggested as if he were finding the apartment full of objects. There is no explaining such a fact but by supposing that the *idea* of the place is the circumstance which occasions the suggestion.

Or, to take the converse of this instance: Let a person be conducted into an apartment where he sees a certain object, and afterwards be conducted into the same apartment, but so altered that he does not know it to be the same,) where he sees a different object; and in this case the idea of the first object will not be suggested. The reason is, though the apartment is actually the same, yet as the same ideas of it are not obtained, there is nothing to occasion the suggestion.

Ideas whose objects exist in the same place, are supposed by philosophers to acquire power to suggest each other. If we obtain the idea of an object which exists in a certain place, and afterwards the idea of another which exists in the same place, the former idea, say philosophers, will be suggested on the occurrence of the latter.

1. Suppose that the objects exist in the same place where we obtain ideas of them. This case amounts to the same as the foregoing, and is to be explained in the same way.

2. Suppose that the place where the objects exist is different from that where we obtain ideas of them. Let a person inform us of two objects in a distant place. In this case, along with the idea of the first object, we obtain an idea of the place where it is said to exist, and also, I may add, an idea of the *name* of



the place, and perhaps of various other circumstances. Along with the idea of the second object, we obtain an idea of the same place, of the same name, and perhaps of the same circumstances; that is, we obtain ideas the same with those which coexisted with the idea of the first object, and, precisely as the law of precedence would lead us to expect, they suggest the idea of the first object.

The phenomena, indeed, are utterly incompatible with any other principle of suggestion; for if we have *forgotten* the place, its name, and all other related circumstances, we uniformly find that the first idea is not suggested on the occurrence of the second: And, on the other hand, if we recollect the place, its name, or other related circumstances, the first idea is apt to be suggested, though we obtain no idea of any second object at all. When we obtain, too, ideas of *a number* of objects, along with that of a certain place, we obtain ideas of *a number* of objects, upon the recurrence of the idea of the place. When we *repeatedly* obtain ideas of a number of objects along with that of a certain place, the *more readily* do we obtain ideas of these objects upon the recurrence of the idea of the place. When a number of circumstances are connected with the idea of the place, we likewise the more readily obtain ideas of the objects, upon the recurrence of these circumstances, with the idea of the place: And the very same happens when any thing renders our idea of the place particularly lively or vivid. Every thing agrees with what the law of precedence requires.

## SECT. VI.

*Relation of Cause and Effect.*

Ideas are supposed to acquire power to suggest each other, by virtue of the relation of cause and effect. In this case, however, it is manifest that the idea which is the cause, must *precede* the idea which is the effect, and consequently there is here no deviation from the law of precedence, but an example of it: And on the other hand, the idea which is the effect, must *follow* the idea which is the cause; and consequently, if the observations formerly made be just, the former cannot suggest the latter, for, according to those observations, ideas do not acquire power to suggest others by *following* them.

Ideas are supposed to acquire power to suggest each other, in consequence of their *objects* being connected by the relation of cause and effect. When once we have discovered that fire is the cause of the sensation of heat, the idea of fire, it is said, will afterwards suggest an idea of the sensation, and an idea of the sensation an idea of fire; in other words, an idea of the cause will suggest an idea of the effect, and an idea of the effect an idea of the cause.

There cannot be a doubt that when an *individual* cause and effect are taken, the result may seem as now stated; for in such a case it is hardly possible to prevent the ideas from coexisting for a short time. But to see the true state of things, let us take a considerable number of causes with their effects; and this



surely is the most reasonable course. Inform a person that a vessel at sea is affected by the tides, that the tides are affected by the moon, that the moon is affected by the earth, and the earth by the rest of the planetary system. Make him go over this train of effects, with their causes, in the order now mentioned, until he can repeat them with perfect facility; then try if he can repeat them with equal facility in the reverse order, and though the train is exceedingly short, it will soon be found that he is completely at a stand. The idea of a cause, therefore, has no power, *independently of the law of precedence*, to suggest the idea of its effect.

Nor has the idea of an effect any power, independently of the law of precedence, to suggest the idea of its cause. Inform a person that the earth produces food for the benefit of man, that food promotes health, that health promotes activity, and that activity procures a multitude of pleasures. Make him go over this train of causes and effects, in the order now mentioned, until he can repeat them with perfect facility; then try if he can repeat them with equal facility in the reverse order, and, exactly as in the former case, it will be found that though the train is exceedingly short, he is soon entirely at a stand. The idea of an effect, therefore, has as little power, *independently of the law of precedence*, to suggest the idea of its cause, as the idea of a cause to suggest the idea of its effect; and in no case, indeed, has either of them any power to suggest the other, except in so far as they come under the law of precedence. The relation of cause and



effect, therefore, presents no exception to the general doctrine I have proposed.

## SECT. VII.

### *Relation of Similarity.*

Ideas are supposed to acquire power to suggest each other in consequence of the relation of *similarity*, and whatever be the explanation, unquestionably similar ideas *do* suggest one another. Yesterday I saw a large winged animal which I had never seen before, and obtained a very distinct idea of it; to-day I saw another winged animal of the same species, and obtained a very distinct idea of it also. The second idea was *similar* to the first, and it instantly suggested the first. The following is evidently the explanation.

When I yesterday saw the first animal, I obtained ideas of its peculiar properties, and likewise of those common to it, with all the individuals of the species to which it belonged. To-day, when I saw the other animal, I also obtained ideas of its peculiar properties, and of those common to it, with all the individuals of the species to which it belonged. That is, along with the ideas of the peculiar properties of the second animal, I obtained a number of ideas which coexisted with those of the peculiar properties of the first. According to the doctrine of coexistence formerly explained, they should suggest ideas of the peculiar properties of the first. When they do so, I have ideas both of the common and of the peculiar properties of the first animal; in other words, I have an idea of

the first animal itself, for that idea can be nothing but the aggregate of the ideas of its common and peculiar properties.

The other phenomena of similarity equally agree with the law of precedence. If a considerable number of similar ideas be obtained, a considerable number when any of them recurs is apt to be suggested. The more frequently a number of similar ideas is obtained, the more readily when any of them recurs are they apt to be suggested. The greater the number of particulars, too, in which similar ideas resemble each other, the more readily when any of them recurs are they apt to be suggested. And, in fine, the more vivid the state in which similar ideas are obtained, the more readily when any of them recurs in a state equally vivid are they apt to be suggested.

Ideas, whose *objects* are similar, are supposed to have power to suggest one another; but this case is evidently included in the foregoing: for whenever objects appear similar, their ideas must do the same, or rather the similar appearance of objects, and the similarity of their ideas, is one and the same thing.

But not only do similar ideas possess the power of mutual suggestion, the same idea which is suggested by any one of them, is apt to be suggested by any other. A few days ago I examined a singular species of shrub, which was covered with beautiful leaves and flowers, and it instantly brought to my mind the idea of a friend with whom I had formerly examined it. To-day I examined a similar shrub, which was likewise covered with beautiful leaves and flowers, and it also



brought to my mind the idea of my friend. The explanation is obvious.

When I examined the second shrub, besides ideas of its peculiar properties, I obtained ideas of those which were common to it with the first; for all similar objects possess some properties in common,—that is, I obtained a number of ideas, the same with those which formerly coexisted with that of my friend. These suggested the idea of my friend, exactly as the doctrine so often mentioned would lead us to expect.

Some have maintained that ideas acquire power to suggest each other in consequence of the relation of similarity among the *words* which denote them. This strange notion is adopted by Stewart, who mentions as an instance the following line from the Rape of the Lock—

*“ Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.”*

The ideas contained in this line, he says, are associated, not according to their own relations, nor those of their objects, but according to the relations among the *words* by which they are expressed. Nothing can more completely evince the low state of mental science, than a writer of Stewart's talents maintaining such an extraordinary opinion. The case appears to be the plainest imaginable.

Though words are commonly said to suggest the ideas which they denote, yet, strictly speaking, it is not the *words themselves* which suggest them, but our *ideas* of the words; for if we do not *see* a word, *hear* it pronounced, or in some other way obtain an



*idea* of it, it will never suggest any thing. The explanation of the above instance is evidently this.

Our ideas of the words *puffs*, *powders*, *patches*, *bibles*, *billet-doux*, being somewhat similar, in consequence of the alliteration, will more readily be suggested by each other, than if they were dissimilar; and as the ideas which the words denote are intimately associated with the ideas of the words themselves, they too, of course, will be more readily suggested. These are all the suggestions which take place; and according to the doctrine of similarity already explained, they come under the law of precedence as much as any other.

#### SECT. VIII.

##### *Relation of Contrast.*

IDEAS are supposed to acquire power to suggest one another, in consequence of the relation of *contrast*. This case is not only different from the former, but *apparently* contrary to it; for if similar ideas suggest each other, and the greater their similarity, the greater be their power of mutual suggestion, it seems necessarily to follow that *contrast*, which is founded on *dissimilitude*, should have no suggesting power at all. But let us examine the case a little more attentively.

1. In every case where contrasted ideas suggest one another, it will be found that there is a considerable degree of *similarity* along with the contrast. If we see a large horse, and afterwards a small one, the idea of the small one, it is said, will suggest an idea of the

large one : or, if we see a small horse, and afterwards a large one, the idea of the large one, it is said, will suggest an idea of the small one ; and the facts themselves cannot be disputed. But every person must perceive that these ideas, though *contrasted* in some particulars, *agree* in many others ; for the ideas of all horses have many particulars in which they agree. The question, therefore, is, whether is it owing to the particulars in which they agree, or to those in which they differ, that the suggestion is accomplished ? It is owing, I imagine, at least in part, to those in which they agree. " The palace and the cottage," says Dr Brown, " the cradle and the grave, the extremes of *indigence* and luxurious *splendour*, are not connected in artificial antithesis only, but arise, in ready succession, to the observer of *either*. Of all moral reflections, none are so universal as those which are founded on the instability of mortal distinctions,—the sudden reverses of fortune—the frailty of beauty—the precariousness of life itself—all which reflections are manifestly the result of that species of suggestion which we are considering ; for the very notion of instability implies the previous conception of that state of *decay*, which is opposite to the flourishing state observed by us. If we see the imperial victor moving along, in all the splendour of majesty and conquest, we must have thought of sudden disaster, before we can moralize on the briefness of earthly triumph." These observations are certainly just, but all the *contrasted* particulars here referred to have many circumstances in which they *resemble* one another. Would the idea of a palace, which suggests the idea of a cot-



tage, as readily suggest a contrasted idea to which it has no sort of similitude,—an idea for example of the rotten trunk of an old tree? This last idea is far more contrasted with that of a palace, than the idea of any cottage is; but no person surely will allege that it is as readily suggested by it. Let us take another instance. In the morning, while sitting by the sea shore, I see a small pebble of a *bright* colour, and *unshapely* form, lying perfectly *at rest*; in the evening, while walking in the fields, I see a large horse of a *dusky* colour, and *elegant* form, running with *great swiftness*. Has the idea of the horse as great a tendency to suggest the idea of the pebble, as the idea of a palace, the idea of a cottage? No person, I imagine, will allege that it has; and the reason is, though the ideas are far more contrasted than those of any palace and cottage, yet they want all resemblance and analogy.

2. Ideas, when presented to us in contrast, are usually more *vivid* and *distinct*, and accompanied with more *vivid* and *distinct emotions*, than in other circumstances, and hence they are apt to be more taken notice of. When the idea of a horse of an ordinary size suggests the idea of another horse of an ordinary size, both of them soon pass out of the mind without being regarded; but when the idea of a large horse suggests that of a small one, or the idea of a small horse that of a large one, a degree of wonder or surprise is excited. The ideas are more taken notice of, and being more readily observed, they are apt to strike us as being more readily presented to us.

3. We often *purposely* resort to contrast for the



sake of the vivid ideas and emotions it affords; and a habit of association by contrast is thus formed, which, like all other habits, operates afterwards spontaneously. We have only to look to the phenomena of contrast, to see the power of habit over it. The contrasts of the poet are chiefly poetical, those of the philosopher are chiefly philosophical, and those of the theologian are chiefly theological. Even in the ordinary affairs of life we witness the influence of habit over contrast. The husbandman, for instance, very seldom thinks of the contrast between a palace and a cottage, but he often enough thinks of the contrast between a *bad harvest* and a *good one*.

If we duly attend to these considerations, we shall have reason, I am persuaded, to be satisfied, that the phenomena of contrast form no exception to the law of precedence, but that, like those of the other relations formerly considered, they are all completely controlled by it.

## SECT. IX

### *Method.*

A METHODICAL arrangement of our ideas has considerable influence in facilitating their suggestion. A work which has all its different parts disposed in good order, is uniformly more easily remembered than one where every thing is confused.

In explaining this case, the first thing to be remarked is, that it is not the principle of arrangement itself that facilitates the suggestion, but our *perceiving* the principle. A number of ideas, though ar-

ranged in the best manner possible, always appear confused when the principle which connects them is not *observed*, and are remembered with as much difficulty as if there were no such principle. And on the other hand, when we fancy that we perceive a principle of arrangement among a number of ideas, they are almost as easily remembered as if there were really such a principle. False theories, it is well known, promote the recollection of phenomena nearly as effectually as true. Nor is there the smallest difficulty in accounting for the influence of Method.

1. In committing to memory a series of ideas, among which we observe some principle of arrangement, the ideas are repeated in such a way, that the first precedes the second, the second the third, the third the fourth, and so on; and along with every idea in the series there is also an idea of the principle by which the whole are connected. The consequence therefore must be, that when the first idea of the series again occurs, the idea of the principle of connexion will be apt to occur likewise, and *both together* must have greater power to suggest the second than the first *alone* would have. In like manner the second, together with the idea of the principle of connexion, must have greater power to suggest the third than the second alone would have, and so on. The actual phenomena completely accord with these conclusions. Every person has felt how easily he could repeat certain trains of thought, while the principle by which they are connected was *in his eye*, and how suddenly he has been stopped when he happened to *lose sight of it*.



2. In committing to memory a series of ideas, which we observe to be connected by some principle of arrangement, it will generally be found that some of the ideas have been *formerly observed by us in the same connexion*, and that such a circumstance should facilitate their recollection is obvious at first sight, and accords with facts innumerable. An experienced mathematician has frequently observed the connexions among geometrical ideas, and hence he will remember the different steps of a new geometrical demonstration, when a person unaccustomed to such matters,—a poet or historian for example,—could not remember one of them. A clergyman has frequently had occasion to observe the connexions among theological ideas, and hence he will remember the scope of a theological dissertation, when a person of different habits,—a merchant or agriculturist,—could not remember a single particular : And so in all other cases.

3. When our ideas are arranged under no observable principle, our endeavours to recover any one that is amissing must be employed *at random*, and, of course, may be employed long enough without being successful, whereas when every thing is seen to be in good order, our researches are confined within certain definite boundaries—we know whereabouts to look for what we are in quest of—and if our memory be not very defective, we may expect to recover it. To illustrate these remarks by an example.

A biographer tells me that A. B. is exceedingly fond of abstract speculations, and is often inattentive to external objects ; that one day, in the height of his mystical contemplations, he heedlessly thrust his hand



into the fire, and was severely pained ; that the pain instantly roused him from his reveries, and made him move from the fire with great alacrity.

Now it may so be that I never before heard of this adventure of A B, yet after hearing it I find not the smallest difficulty in recollecting every idea which it contains, although it contains a considerable number. The above reasons very effectually account for the readiness of my recollection.

1. Along with the idea of abstract speculations, I have the idea of causation—for that is the principle by which the ideas are connected—and these ideas precede that of inattention to external objects. Along with the idea of inattention to external objects, I have likewise the idea of causation, and these precede that of A B's thrusting his hand into the fire ; and so with the other ideas. Now, when I try to go over these ideas a second time, the idea of abstract speculations, and of the principle of causation, must together have greater influence to suggest the idea of inattention to external objects, than the idea of abstract speculations alone could have. The same must happen with the other ideas, so that the whole story will be more readily recollected than if I had observed no such principle.

2. Though all the ideas in the above story, together with that of causation, have never occurred to me in the same order before, yet a considerable number of them have done so. I have frequently had the idea of abstract speculations, along with that of causation, and the idea of inattention to external objects, as the result of the cause. I have frequently had the

idea of inattention to external objects along with the idea of causation; and although I never perhaps heard of people's putting their hands into the fire in consequence of such inattention, yet this is but one part of the story. I have frequently had the idea of a person's hand being in the fire along with the idea of causation, and the idea of the pain as the result of the cause. The same has happened with the remaining parts of the story. Here then are a number of ideas which have frequently preceded a number of others, and acquired power to suggest them, and consequently the story in which they are contained should be the more easily recollected.

3. Suppose that in trying to remember the above ideas, I should find that one of them has escaped me,—the idea, for example, of A B's feeling pain on putting his hand into the fire,—and what is the course which I will naturally adopt to recover it? The course is obvious: As the ideas are all connected by the principle of causation, I shall naturally be induced to think of the effects that result from a person's hand being in the fire. My thoughts will thus be directed to the very spot where the idea is to be found, and it is almost impossible that I should not meet with it.

It is utterly unnecessary, I imagine, to examine any other principle of association. Their number is believed by many to be infinite, or at least indefinite; but on reflection I am persuaded they will all be found to resolve themselves into the one I have mentioned—the principle of *Antecedence* or *Precedence*.



## SECT. X.

*Duration of Ideas.*

OUR ideas are by no means uniform in their duration, but are sometimes considerably stationary, and at others exceedingly evanescent. This difference has considerable influence on our intellectual and moral character, and it is of some consequence to discover the circumstances on which it depends.

With regard to ideas suggested by organic impressions, their duration, whether evanescent or otherwise, is easily accounted for. Such ideas, if nothing interfere, must be of the same duration with the impressions which excite them ; for it would be absurd to suppose that a cause may continue to operate and not be counteracted, and yet the effect cease. If the impressions be stationary, the ideas must be stationary ; and if the impressions be transient, the ideas must be transient. If any counteracting cause, however, interfere, the ideas may be transient, though the impressions be ever so stationary. There seem to be three causes by which an impression may be counteracted.

1. The superior influence of other impressions. A strong impression may evidently overcome a weak one, and exclude the ideas suggested by it.

2. The superior influence of the idea excited by the impression. As soon as an impression suggests an idea, that idea may suggest others, these may suggest others, and so on ; and the original idea be completely lost sight of. The influence of an impression



may be thus counteracted by the very idea which it-self suggests.

3. The superior influence of coexisting ideas. At the time that an impression suggests an idea, a number of others may be present to the mind, and these, as in the former case, may lead away the mind from the one suggested by the impression.

By one or other of these causes, the influence of impressions, I apprehend, is frequently counteracted. Our clothes are continually making impressions on every part of our body, and yet we are hardly ever sensible of the ideas which they are fitted to excite. The same happens in many other cases, and in all of them, I imagine, the influence of the impressions is greatly impaired, and in not a few entirely overcome.

The case with association is, in many respects, similar. If an idea suggest another by virtue of association, it must happen that the suggested idea, if nothing interfere, will be of the same duration with the suggesting one. If the suggesting idea be stationary, the one suggested must be stationary; and if the suggesting idea be evanescent, the one suggested must be evanescent. If any counteracting cause, however, interfere, the suggested idea may be evanescent, though the suggesting one be ever so stationary. The following are the causes that seem capable of producing this effect:—

1. The influence of impressions. At the time that an idea suggests another by virtue of association, such a number of impressions may be made on the body as to counteract the suggesting idea, and exclude the one suggested. The influence of ideas, I imagine, is

frequently counteracted in this way. I look at an object before me, and the perception of it calls up a number of associated ideas. While so engaged, a severe stroke is made on my hand, and, though the object still continues in my view, yet all the associated ideas are instantly excluded.

The impression which suggests the idea may co-operate with other impressions in counteracting it. I recollect of once hearing a public speaker declaim with such prodigious vociferation, that some of the most common words failed to suggest their customary meaning. The word *horse*, for example, hardly suggested any idea of the object signified by that term. The enormous sound comprehended almost every thing of which I was conscious. The reason I imagine was, that the sensation of sound almost entirely occupied my mind, and of course the idea usually suggested by it was nearly excluded. Had the impression which excited the sensation been aided by the influence of other impressions, there cannot be a doubt that the idea might have been excluded altogether.

2. The influence of coexisting ideas. At the time that an idea suggests another, such a number of extraneous ideas may be present as to occupy the mind and exclude the one suggested. I look to a book before me, and the sight of it suggests an idea of its author. While so engaged, a friend, whom I have not seen for several years, enters my room, and though the book remains full in my view, I instantly cease to think of its author as much, as if he had never existed.

The idea which suggests the other may co-operate



with extraneous ones in counteracting its own influence. Almost all our ideas have power to suggest a multitude of others. When they suggest a particular one, it is not because they have power to suggest that one *only*, but because their power to suggest that one is strongest. Should their power, however, to suggest others be aided by coexisting ones, the influence of the combined power may suggest these others, and the one first suggested be totally excluded. A very small degree of aid from coexisting ideas may produce this effect. The perception of the phrase *a ton*, suggests the idea of a well-known weight. With my pen, I annex an *e* to the final *n*, the phrase then becomes *a tone*; and I instantly obtain the idea of a certain modification of sound, while the idea of the weight completely disappears. The perception in this case, however, remains exactly as before. The whole change that has taken place is the *additional* perception of a very small letter situated in a particular way with regard to the others; and yet this trivial circumstance alters entirely the whole associated phenomena.

3. The idea suggested may possess such power to excite others as to counteract the influence of the one by which itself is suggested. When an idea suggests another, that idea may suggest others, these may suggest others, and so on; and the mind be so completely led away by these successive ideas, as entirely to lose sight of the one which gave rise to them.

The suggesting idea may co-operate with other ideas in counteracting its own influence. If the suggesting idea, for example, continue for a little after



it has excited its associate, there must be *two* ideas in the mind at the same instant,—the suggesting idea and the one suggested by it. Call the suggesting idea *the first one*, and the idea suggested by it *the second*. Then if the first idea, together with the second, have greater power to suggest a third than the first alone has to suggest the second, the third will be suggested on the appearance of the second, and may instantly exclude the second. In other words, may counteract the power of the first idea to suggest the second. The actual phenomena entirely agree with these conclusions.

1. In the case of association, our ideas are always opposed by a great number of counteracting causes of very considerable power, and by one or other of them, their suggesting influence is apt to be speedily overcome. We should accordingly find that ideas of association are usually very evanescent in their duration, and rapid in their succession, and every one knows that they actually are so.

2. In the case of organic impressions, a counteracting cause can never derive any aid from the impression which it opposes. An impression, therefore, can never be counteracted but by some cause of greater power than its own; and when the impression is very forcible, such a cause may not often occur. In the case of association, however, a counteracting cause may be greatly aided by the idea whose influence it opposes. So much so, that the most trivial circumstance, as we have seen, may alter the whole phenomena, and render the suggested ideas exceedingly transient, though the suggesting ones be ever so stationary. We

should consequently find that ideas of association are much more evanescent than those excited by impressions; and it is almost unnecessary to remark, that they actually are so. When we speak of the rapidity with which ideas pass through the mind, we almost always refer to ideas of association. Those afforded by impressions are generally somewhat stationary, and they so evidently depend on external causes, that their succession, whether rapid or otherwise, attracts little notice; but ideas of association seem to fly through the mind with the celerity of lightning; and, being controlled in their movements by no apparent cause, the quickness of their transitions is remarked by the most unthinking.

3. Could an idea be found of greater power to suggest another than any counteracting cause is sufficient to overcome, the suggested idea should be of the same duration with the one suggesting it; and if the latter, therefore, be stationary, the former should be stationary likewise. Such an idea may be found, and the phenomena it exhibits completely accord with this conclusion.

It is universally acknowledged that the original appearance of objects to the eye is altogether unattended with any idea of their distance *in directum*, and that every object would appear close upon the eye, (as soon as we learn that the eye is the organ of vision,) were it not for the organ of touch. It is highly desirable, however, that we do perceive the distance of objects from the eye, and as the only way of being enabled to do so, is to associate their original appearance with the idea of their distance, we naturally resort to



this expedient; and of course their original appearance acquires power to suggest an idea of their distance. By numerous repetitions,—and we are led to such repetitions for the convenience of seeing well,—the appearance may acquire such power to suggest an idea of the distance, as no counteracting cause can overcome; and the idea of the distance, therefore, should be as stationary as the original appearance itself. This, accordingly, is what actually happens. The original appearance of an object to the eye becomes ultimately so strongly associated with an idea of its distance, that were we to look to the object for a whole day, the idea of its distance would remain.

I may also remark that ideas suggested by impressions are usually more *vivid* than those suggested by association. In some cases this may be owing to the higher suggesting power of impressions, in others, to their power's being aided by association; but in most cases it seems to be owing to the circumstance, that ideas afforded by impressions are the *more stationary*. Impressions, as already remarked, are not so liable to be counteracted as association, and the ideas excited by the former are consequently in general of longer continuance than those excited by the latter. They seldom, indeed, continue for any considerable time, but many of them continue at least so long as to arrive at their full vividness. The case with ideas of Association is different. No sooner does an idea of this kind enter the mind than another follows it, and the duration of any of them is in general quite momentary. Were it not for this circumstance, there can hardly be a doubt that many ideas of association



would fully equal in vividness those afforded by impressions. In the instance above-mentioned, where an idea of association is stationary, it is as vivid as any idea whatever. Indeed, the idea of the distance of objects from the eye is always so vivid, that it would be difficult to convince persons unacquainted with the subject, that it is not obtained in the same way as the sensation of colour.

## SECT. XI.

*Combination of Ideas.*

IDEAS of *time* and *space* are originally suggested in connexion with all our other ideas, and hence every idea appears to the mind to exist in connexion with time and space. So constantly and universally do they appear in this light, that it would strike us as almost a contradiction in terms to allege, that an idea may exist and yet exist *no where*, or that it may exist and yet exist in *no time*. *Time* and *space* appear to us to comprehend every thing.\*

As our ideas appear to exist in *time* and *space*, they must appear to exist in the same points of time and space, unless some cause of adequate power shall make them appear to exist in different ones. Any cause that is able to suggest ideas is sufficient to make them appear *in conjunction*, but a distinct cause, or a distinct modification of some cause, is requisite to make them appear *separately*.

The appearance of ideas in the *same points of time*

\* See note D.

*and space*, constitutes what is called *the combination of ideas*,—at least when the expression is used in its strictest acceptation. Ideas do not seem *combined* while they merely *suggest* one another. Before they can appear combined, they must be so *united* as to seem *mixed* or *blended together* into one aggregate whole.

Organic impressions always present a number of ideas in combination. When we feel an object to be warm, soft, and smooth, the feelings seem to be so completely *blended* with one another, and with the idea of the object itself, that they cannot be disjoined even in imagination. Association has frequently the same influence. Even ideas which once existed separately are often so combined by association, that they can hardly again be disjoined. To illustrate this by a few examples.

1. An object which emits sound does not so much seem to excite the sensation of sound *in us*, as to have the sensation connected *with itself*. The sound of a trumpet, for instance, does not seem to exist either in *our minds* or in *our ears*, but at the *trumpet's mouth*. I appeal to any one who has ever heard such a sound, if it did not seem to proceed from the *very spot* where the trumpet itself was, or if any sound of any kind does not seem to proceed from the *very spot* where the object that emits it is. Does not the fury of the tempest seem to be howling *around* us? Does not the noise of thunder seem to be raging in *the heavens*? And,—to take a more common case,—does not the sound of a person's voice seem to come from *his lips*? Association is manifestly the source



of all such phenomena. Our ideas of objects, and the sounds which they emit, are utterly dissimilar in their own nature, but they become by association so intimately conjoined, that the latter not only suggest the former, but seem to be *incorporated* with them.\*

2. A beautiful object does not so much seem to excite emotions of beauty *in us*, as to have the beauty attached *to itself*. It would strike the greater part of mankind as very extraordinary to be told, that what they call a beautiful object is nothing but an object which excites certain agreeable feelings in their *own minds*, and that it has as little beauty, independently of mind, as the most indifferent object in nature. They are perfectly persuaded that they *see* the object to be beautiful, and it is for this very reason, indeed, they call it beautiful. You would as soon convince them that the noise of thunder, or the roaring of artillery, exists in their minds, as that the beauty of an object exists there.

The explanation is the same as above. The idea of the object, and the emotion of beauty which the

\* It is often said that ideas are associated with *outward objects*. Strictly speaking, however, ideas are *never* associated with *outward objects*, but with *ideas* of the objects. Ideas are always associated with one another. This remark may perhaps strike some as almost a mere truism, and yet from overlooking it, many of the most interesting phenomena of mind have been left by philosophers in a state of the utmost perplexity. It should never be forgotten, that one of the most important duties of the metaphysician is to give an accurate statement of the facts of his science in language the most simple and literal. Unless this rule be attended to, the study of the human mind must be in a great measure nugatory.



object excites, are so intimately associated, that they seem completely *intermingled*, and to occupy the *same spot*. In fact, every object without exception gradually assumes an *aspect* corresponding to the predominant feelings it excites, even though it once had a totally different aspect.

Fellow, begone ; I cannot brook thy sight,  
This *news* hath made thee a most ugly man.

“ A mode of dress,” says Stewart, “ which at first appeared awkward, acquires, in a few weeks, or months, the appearance of elegance. By being accustomed to see it worn by those whom we consider as models of taste, it becomes associated with the agreeable impressions which we receive from the ease and grace and refinement of their manners. When it pleases by itself, the effect is to be ascribed, not to the object actually before us, but to the impressions with which it has been generally connected, and which it naturally recalls to the mind.”

I may here remark, in explanation, that a mode of dress never appears beautiful until it be *so associated* with the impressions which Stewart speaks of, that they seem to be *incorporated* with it, and not merely to be *recalled* by it. The idea of dress, and the emotions of beauty, must be completely intermingled and blended together, before the dress can appear beautiful. The great defect of the prevailing doctrine concerning beauty, is this notion of *recalling* emotions as *distinct phenomena*. Mr Alison, in his Essay on Taste, insists that there must be even *trains* of emotions to render an object beautiful—an opinion con-

trary both to theory and observation. It is to mistake the whole character of association, to imagine that it merely enables ideas to suggest emotions, and that it cannot so *blend* the one with the other, as to make them seem to the mind but one *complex aggregate*. And, in point of fact, beauty does not seem to recall any thing, but to present itself directly to our view.

3. An opinion long prevailed that we can deduce effects from their causes, somewhat in the same way as we can deduce particular conclusions from the general truths which comprehend them. Effects were supposed to be *contained* in their causes, and by examining the causes, it was thought that the effects might be discovered by a process of reasoning. This strange imagination infected the whole of the ancient philosophy, and rendered the most powerful efforts of genius in a great measure nugatory. It springs from the source already mentioned,—the association of ideas. The idea of a cause is so intimately associated in our minds with the idea of producing some effect, that the two ideas become so blended with one another as to appear in a great measure *incorporated*, and the former being the more important idea, seems to comprehend the latter.

The same confusion of thought, though in a different way, very powerfully affects the philosophy of the moderns. Philosophers will not now contend that we can deduce effects from their causes by mere reasoning, but they maintain, nevertheless, that there is an *indissoluble link* by which the former are connected with the latter, or that causes contain an *ope-*



*rating principle*, by which their effects are made to result from them.

Mr Hume and Dr Brown have the merit of subverting these very prevalent errors, and showing that there is neither *link* nor operation *intervening between* a cause and its effect, and that the operation of a cause is nothing but some of its effects *actually taking place*. In short, that cause and effect are merely *relations* among things, without implying any intermediate *entity* whatsoever. I am far from being able to assent to the account which Hume and Brown give of the *nature* of causation, but that a *bare relation* is all that it comprehends, they have proved, I conceive, beyond all contradiction.

4. The common words of language appear to the bulk of mankind to *comprehend* the meaning they express, and not merely to suggest it. You could never convince an English peasant that the word *horse* does nothing but suggest to his mind an idea of a certain well-known quadruped, and that it has no more natural *fitness* for doing so than any other word that may be uttered,—the word *equus*, for example. The word *equus*, he will tell you, is a most useless word, a mere *empty* sound, and fit for nothing, whereas the word *horse* is full of meaning, and exactly suited to the object it is employed to denote. The reason is, the idea of the word *horse*, and the idea of the animal expressed by it, are so completely associated in his mind, that they seem to be *intermingled with each other*, and to form but *one complex whole*.

This intermingling of the ideas of words with the ideas they denote, is the source of endless confusion



and perplexity, and has drawn from philosophers of all parties the bitterest lamentations. Mr Locke goes so far as to allege that confusion of ideas, without reference to words, is hardly conceivable; and though this is no doubt going to an extreme,—for almost all kinds of ideas may be blended together,—yet certainly ideas of words are particularly apt to be blended with ideas of other things.

But let us not forget that if the intermingling of the ideas of words with the ideas they denote, be the source of many inconveniences, it is also the source of many advantages. It may lead us to form into one compound conception things which are totally dissimilar; but, by the very circumstance of its doing so, it often enables us the more effectually to distinguish the compound from every thing else. If we attempt, for instance, to conceive the relation of *causation* apart from the words by which it is usually expressed, we shall soon find ourselves engaged in an undertaking of the utmost perplexity. Both Hume and Brown have endeavoured to describe the nature of this relation, and after the utmost efforts of ingenuity, both, I am persuaded, have entirely failed. Tell a person, however, in *words*, that one thing is the cause of another,—that a storm at sea is the cause of a certain shipwreck,—and although the most illiterate of mankind, he will understand you in an instant.

The same remarks may be applied to many other words. The meaning of such words as *of*, *to*, *from*, *by*, *with*, *in*, &c. is easily understood when we employ the words themselves, but it would puzzle the acutest metaphysician in Europe to give an abstract descrip-

tion of their meaning. The truth is, that the idea of many words, and the idea of their meaning, are so thoroughly *united*, as to form to the mind but one complex whole, so that though it is easy to distinguish the entire compound from other things, yet it is difficult in the extreme to distinguish its own ingredients.

The distinguishing of things by words is frequently of great service to memory. In endeavouring to fix any series of objects in our memory, we may either proceed by repeatedly going over the objects themselves, or by repeatedly going over the words which denote them. In some cases, the latter is by far the preferable method. If the objects be very *complex*, the resorting to their verbal appellations relieves us from the complexity, and presents to us things that are very simple; and if they be *indefinite* or *obscure*, their verbal appellations relieve us from the indefiniteness and obscurity, and present to us things that are both distinct and vivid. In both cases, we are able to fix the objects in our memory more easily than we could otherwise do.

The distinguishing of things by words, too, is, on many occasions, the chief instrument we employ for holding together the combinations of our ideas. This is well stated by Locke, in his chapter on Language. "The near relation," says that celebrated writer, "that there is between species, essences, and their general names, at least in mixed modes, will farther appear, when we consider that it is the name which seems to preserve those essences, and to give them their lasting duration; for the connexion between the



loose parts of these complex ideas being made by the mind, this union, which has no particular foundation in nature, would cease again, were there not something that did, as it were, hold it together, and keep the parts from scattering. Though, therefore, it be the mind that makes the collection, it is the name which is, as it were, the knot that ties them fast together. What a vast variety of different ideas does the word *triumphus* hold together and deliver to us as one species! Had this name been never made, or quite lost, we might, no doubt, have had descriptions of what passed in that solemnity; but yet I think, that which holds those different parts together, in the unity of one complex idea, is that very word annexed to it; without which, the several parts of that solemnity would no more be thought to make one thing, than any other show, which, having never been made but once, had never been united into one complex idea under one denomination." Nor is it at all difficult to see *how* the words which Locke refers to should produce the effects he ascribes to them. They plainly do so, in consequence of the ideas of the words becoming *more* intimately associated with the ideas of the things they denote, than these latter ideas are with one another.

It should also be observed, that our distinguishing of things by words, prevents the necessity of our entering into a full detail of our ideas on every occasion when we need to advert to them. In speaking of a forest, we speak of what consists of a great multitude of objects, having each a trunk, roots, branches, leaves, &c. In speaking of a flock, we speak of what consists of a number of objects, having each a body, a head,



legs, eyes, ears, &c. Other things are still more complex; and to form ideas of every particular they comprehend, on every occasion we need to advert to them, would be highly troublesome. There are many things, too, that are exceedingly obscure, and apt to be confounded with others. This is the case with most of the operations of mind, and even with some of the relations of external objects; and to be obliged to form separate ideas of these things on every occasion when we need to advert to them, would be altogether intolerable. In both cases, we escape the inconvenience, by arranging things under particular words, and associating the ideas of the things with the ideas of the words, so intimately, that the latter become *marks of distinction* for the former, and capable of being *substituted* for them. By this expedient, we can proceed on all ordinary occasions, without any specific attention to ideas of things, and are not prevented from resorting to such attention, whenever circumstances render it necessary.

### *Conception.*

I may here take notice of a singular opinion advanced by Stewart respecting *Conception*. "By conception," he says, he means "that power of the mind which enables it to form a notion of an absent object of perception, or of a sensation which it has formerly felt." But nothing can be more evident, than that such notions are merely ideas arising from association; for, if ideas have the power of associating, or suggesting one another, there cannot be a doubt that those of absent objects of perception, or of sensations

formerly felt, must be suggested as well as others. When Stewart represents *conception* as a distinct power, he surely does not mean that we can form a notion of an absent object of perception, or of a sensation formerly felt, by a direct effort of *volition*, for the very attempt to make such an effort would imply that the notion is already in some measure formed. This Stewart very explicitly admits. "By means of the association of ideas," he says, "a constant current of thoughts, if I may use the expression, is made to pass through the mind while we are awake. Sometimes the current is interrupted, and the thoughts directed into a new channel, in consequence of the ideas suggested by other men, or of the objects of perception with which we are surrounded. So completely, however, is the mind, in this particular, subject to physical laws, that it has been justly observed, we cannot, by an effort of our will, call up any one thought; and that the train of our ideas depends on causes which operate in a manner inexplicable by us." The truth unquestionably is, that Stewart's power of conception refers merely to a certain class of ideas afforded by association.

### *Imagination.*

Some philosophers regard *Imagination* as the same with association; but this is certainly a mistake. *Imagination*, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, refers to the *mind's forming new combinations among its ideas*, and such an exercise necessarily implies the operation of a different principle from association. Association, however, as Stewart well remarks, must

furnish the materials which imagination makes use of: And, in fact, imagination, as I shall afterwards endeavour to show, is merely the mind's forming into new combinations the materials or ideas which association furnishes.

## SECT. XII.

### *Sentiments of Dr Brown.*

Dr Brown has made a number of valuable remarks on the subject of association, but has nevertheless given a view of it that is exceedingly complex and intricate, and that cannot, I imagine, be reconciled with the phenomena.

Though, for the convenience of illustration, Dr Brown adheres, in some measure, to the principles of Hume, yet he mentions it as highly probable that all the laws of association may be comprehended under the relation of *coexistence* or *proximity*. "But are there, in this case," says he, in his *thirty-fifth lecture*, "truly distinct classes of suggestions, that are not reduceable to any more common principle? or are they not all reduceable to a single influence? I have already remarked the error, into which the common phrase, *the association of ideas*, has led us, by restricting, in our conception, the influence of the suggesting principle to those particular states of mind, which are exclusively denominated ideas; and it is this false restriction which seems to me to have led to this supposition of different principles of association, to be classed in the manner proposed by Hume and others, under distinct heads. All suggestion, as I conceive,



may, if our analysis be sufficiently minute, be found to depend upon prior *coexistence*, or, at least, on such *immediate proximity* as is itself, very probably, a modification of *coexistence*."

This doctrine, that all suggestion, if our analysis be sufficiently minute, may be found to depend on prior *coexistence*, or, at least, on such *immediate proximity* as is itself very probably a modification of *coexistence*, he again and again brings forward, and evidently attaches considerable importance to it. It is a doctrine, however, which is contradicted by the most evident and decisive facts which the mind presents. When a child learns to repeat the letters of the alphabet in the direct order,—to give an example formerly mentioned,—the letter A must *coexist* as long in its mind with the letter B, as the letter B with the letter A, and must likewise have as much proximity to B as B to A : And the letter B must *coexist* as long in its mind with the letter C, as the letter C with the letter B, and have as much proximity to C as C has to B ; and so on. Hence, if ideas suggest each other by virtue of the relation of *coexistence* or *proximity*, the child must be as able to go over the letters in the reverse order as in the direct.

So with a person who learns a tune by the ear. The relation of *coexistence* or *proximity* between every two contiguous notes of the tune is precisely the same whether the notes be taken in the direct order or the reverse, and, consequently, if they suggest each other by virtue of *coexistence* or *proximity*, the person must be as able to go over them in the reverse order as in the direct ; but every one knows that no such abi-

lity would be acquired, and that the direct order is the only practicable one. If we resort to the law of precedence, we can explain these and other phenomena in an instant, and by reducing coexistence and proximity under this law, (which can be done with great ease,) we can carry the simplification much farther than the most refined analysis to which Dr Brown refers, and, at the same time, escape all the intricacies to which his analysis seems necessarily to lead.

In addition to his *primary law*, or laws of suggestion, Dr Brown is compelled to resort to a great variety of *secondary ones*. "After this statement," says he, in his *thirty-seventh lecture*, "and illustration of various relations, by which, without the renewal of *perception*, the mere conception of *one* object is sufficient to awaken the conception of *many others*, that are said to be associated with it, an inquiry very naturally presents itself, which yet seems to have been unaccountably neglected by philosophers. If there be *various* relations, according to which these parts of our trains of thought may succeed each other,—if the sight of a picture, for example, can recall to me the person whom it resembles, the artist who painted it, the room in which it formerly was hung, the friend who presented it to me, the series of portraits of which it then formed a part, and perhaps many circumstances and events that have been accidentally connected with it,—why does it suggest one of these conceptions rather than the others? The variety of the suggestion is surely sufficient to show, that the laws of suggestion, as a principle of the mind, are not confined merely to the relations of the successive feelings, in

which case the suggestion would be uniform,—but that, though these may be considered as *primary* laws, there must be some other circumstances which modify their peculiar influence at different times, and in different persons, and which may, therefore, be denominated *secondary laws of suggestion*. To the investigation of the *secondary* laws, then, as not less important than the *primary*, I next proceed.

“The *first* circumstance which presents itself, as modifying the influence of the primary laws, in inducing one associate conception rather than another, is *the length of time* during which the original feelings from which they flowed continued, when they coexisted, or succeeded each other. Every one must be conscious, that innumerable objects pass before him, which are slightly observed at the time, but which form no permanent associations in the mind: The longer we dwell on objects, the more fully do we rely on our future remembrance of them.” Such facts I formerly showed fall completely under the law of precedence.

“In the *second* place, the parts of a train appear to be more closely and firmly associated, as the original feelings have been *more lively*. We remember brilliant objects, more than those which are faint and obscure. We remember for our whole lifetime, the occasions of great joy or sorrow; we forget the occasions of innumerable slight pleasures or pains, which occur to us every hour. That strong feeling of interest and curiosity, which we call attention, not only leads us to dwell longer on the consideration of certain objects, but also gives more viva-



city to the objects, on which we dwell,—and in both these ways tends, as we have seen, to *fix* them more strongly in the mind.” This is merely what I have mentioned as the fourth general consequence of the law of precedence.

“ In the *third* place, the parts of any train are more readily suggested, in proportion as they have been more *frequently renewed*. It is thus that we remember, after reading them three or four times over, the verses, which we could not repeat when we had read them only once.” This is merely what I mentioned as the second general consequence of the law of precedence.

“ In the *fourth* place, the feelings are connected more strongly, in proportion as they are *more or less recent*. Immediately after reading any single line of poetry, we are able to repeat it, though we have paid no particular attention to it,—in a very few minutes, unless we have paid particular attention to it, we are no longer able to repeat it accurately,—and in a very short time we forget it altogether. There is, indeed, one very striking exception to this law, in the case of old age: for events, which happened in youth, are then remembered, when events of the year preceding are forgotten. Yet, even in the case of extreme age,—when the time is not extended so far back,—the general law still holds, and events, which happened a few hours before, are remembered, when there is a total forgetfulness of what happened a few days before.” These facts do not indicate any *new law* of association, but merely that the influence of association gradually decays; and that, like all the other principles

of the mind, it is much affected by the state of the body.

“ In the *fifth* place, our successive feelings are associated more closely, as *each has coexisted less with other feelings*. The song, which we have never heard but from *one person*, can scarcely be heard again by us without recalling that person again to our memory ; but there is obviously much less chance of this particular suggestion, if we have heard the same air and words frequently sung by others.” Such facts are exactly the same *in kind* with those formerly mentioned—our remembering the time and place of seeing a person whom we have seen only at one time and place.

“ Sixthly, the suggestions vary according to differences of *original constitution*.” This, it is evident, must be the case under the law of precedence ; for such a law, like all others, necessarily leads to different results, according to the difference of circumstances in which it operates, whether these be *constitutional* differences, or *accidental* ones.

“ Seventhly, the suggestions vary according to the differences of temporary emotions.” Unquestionably the law of precedence will occasion different results, according to the different emotions that happen to be present ; for these form an important class of the ideas which the law embraces.

“ Eighthly, the suggestions vary according to changes produced in the state of the body.” All our mental principles, and the law of precedence among the rest, are connected in some mysterious way with the state of the body, and must therefore vary in its



operation, according to the changes which take place in the body.

"Ninthly, the suggestions vary according to general tendencies produced by *prior habits*." These tendencies themselves, are merely results of the law of precedence, and do not therefore imply any new law.

It thus appears, that all the laws of suggestion, *primary* and *secondary*, which Dr Brown mentions, are either comprehended under the law of precedence, or are merely *circumstances* in which the operations of that law are performed. Dr Brown frequently speaks of *these last* as if they were *laws* of suggestion : but this is plainly a mistaken view of them. A falling body is much affected by the medium through which it falls, the objects it comes into contact with in the course of its fall, and by many other circumstances ; but we surely would not call these things *secondary laws of gravitation*. With as much propriety, however, they might be so called, as some of the circumstances which Dr Brown states as secondary laws of suggestion.



## CHAP. III.

## VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

## SECT. I.

*Nature of the Voluntary Principle.*

IN the First Chapter I have endeavoured to point out the law according to which ideas are suggested by impressions on the body ; in the Second, I have examined the law according to which they afterwards suggest one another ; and in both I have been led to regard the mind as entirely passive. No degree of power over its ideas has been ascribed to the mind itself. The mind, however, has certainly very considerable power over its ideas ; and the nature of this power I shall now proceed to investigate.

The mind seems evidently to be capable of *detaining* its ideas for some time. The organs of sense, and the principle of association, keep up a constant train of ideas, and sometimes make the different parts of the train appear and disappear with inconceivable velocity ; but the mind itself, I imagine, has the power

of interposing its own energies whenever it thinks proper, and of *detaining* any idea it may pitch on.

That the mind has really this power, will hardly be disputed. Every person who reflects for a moment, must be conscious of its exercise ; and its exercise, indeed, seems necessary to every function which the mind, as an *active agent*, can perform ; for how can we examine any thing, or compare it with others, or trace out its consequences, or perform any other act concerning it whatever, unless we have the power of keeping it in our view ; in other words, unless we have the power of *detaining* the idea of it ? Take away this power, and all the energies of the mind, as an *active being*, seem to be forthwith annihilated.

It is a power, too, which seems to be either expressly or tacitly admitted by every one. " A number of thoughts," says Dr Reid, " present themselves to the fancy spontaneously ; but if we pay no attention to them, nor hold any conference with them, they pass with the crowd, and are immediately forgot, as if they had never appeared. But those to which we think proper to pay attention, may be *stopped*, and examined, and arranged, for any particular purpose we have in view."

" Though we cannot add to the train," says Kames, " an unconnected idea, yet in a measure we can attend to some ideas, and dismiss others. There are few things but what are connected with many others ; and when a thing thus connected becomes a subject of thought, it commonly suggests many of its connexions. Among these a choice is afforded ; we can *insist* upon one, *rejecting* others." Now, nothing can

be more plain, than that our attending to some ideas and dismissing others, implies a power to *detain* some ideas while others are *dismissed*, and that our *insisting* upon one idea, to the *rejection* of others, implies the very same power. Similar sentiments are expressed by other philosophers, and by none, so far as I know, are they denied ; so that the power of the mind to *detain its ideas*, may be considered as universally admitted.

Is this power any thing else than the *power of volition* ? If a particular idea, for example, be pleasurable, and we *detain it with a view to enjoy the pleasure*, do we not *choose* to enjoy the pleasure ? Or if a particular idea be conjoined with something pleasurable, and we *detain* it with a view to enjoy the pleasure, do we not *choose* to enjoy the pleasure ? Or if a particular idea will be followed by something pleasurable, and we *detain* it with a view to enjoy the pleasure, do we not *choose* to enjoy the pleasure ? In all these cases, our *detaining* the idea with a view to enjoy the pleasure, and our choosing to enjoy the pleasure, are evidently so completely identified, that they cannot be separated even in imagination. We might as well attempt to separate a thing from itself.\* Again,

By detaining our ideas, we check their natural and spontaneous current, and not only obtain a clearer knowledge of them, but call up a variety of associated

\* To act *with a view* to an object, is merely to perform the action, because we *view* it as conducive to the attainment of that object. In other words, our *viewing* the action as conducive to the attainment of the object, is the *cause* or *motive* of the action's being performed.



ones, which had not otherwise appeared. Now, if we *detain* our ideas with a view to check their natural and spontaneous current, do we not *choose* to check their natural and spontaneous current? Or, if we *detain* our ideas with a view to obtain a clearer knowledge of them, do we not *choose* to obtain a clearer knowledge of them? Or, if we *detain* our ideas with a view to call up associated ones, do we not *choose* to call up these associated ones? Precisely as in the former examples, our *detaining* our ideas with a view to these things, and our *choosing* these things, seem to be so completely identified, as not to be separable even in imagination. Again,

It is universally admitted, that when we choose to perform any bodily action, we must have in our mind some idea of the action, and have it in our mind at the very moment the choice is made. No person imagines that we can choose to perform a bodily action, of which, at the time, we have no manner of idea. Now, if we *keep in our mind the idea* of a bodily action, with a view to perform that action, do we not *choose* that we shall perform that action? If we *keep in our mind the idea* of moving our head with a view to move our head, do we not *choose* that we shall move our head? Or, if we *keep in our mind the idea* of moving our hand, with a view to move our hand, do we not *choose* that we shall move our hand? Or, if we *keep in our mind the idea* of moving our foot, with a view to move our foot, do we not *choose* that we shall move our foot? Exactly as in the instances already mentioned, it is impossible to separate these things, even in imagination.

It is unnecessary, I apprehend, to give other examples. Ten thousand others might easily be given, all going to prove, that *volition* is merely *the power of detaining our ideas* for a longer or shorter period, *with a view to the attainment or accomplishment of something.*

If this doctrine be admitted, the exercise of volition must be employed as the means to an end, for to act *with a view* to the attainment or accomplishment of any thing, and to perform the action as the *means to an end*, are expressions of the same import. The labourer engages in his toils *with a view* to his support; that is, as the *means* of his support; the merchant engages in traffic *with a view* to the acquisition of gain; that is, as means to the acquisition of gain: the scholar engages in his studies *with a view* to the acquisition of learning, that is, as means to the acquisition of learning. So with volition; when we perform an act of choice *with a view* to the attainment of an object, we perform the choice as the means to its attainment. The attainment of the object is the *end*, the choice is the *means*, and we employ the means for the sake of the end.

The reason, therefore, of our resorting to the exercise of volition on any occasion is evident. We soon learn from experience that the employment of volition is necessary or conducive to the attainment of things useful or agreeable to us, and hence we are led to employ it that we may obtain them.

The object of volition is usually some event or action. We frequently, indeed, speak of choosing things which are not actions. We speak of choosing a friend,



of choosing a book, of choosing a horse, &c. ; but our meaning in such cases really is, that we choose the *attainment*, or *acquisition* of the friend, of the book, and of the horse.

The action, which is the object of volition, may be an action which is *not our own*. Philosophers, I know, very generally maintain, that volition must always have for its object some of our own actions ; but this opinion seems completely untenable. What hinders me from choosing that my servant shall engage in a particular employment ? that my house shall be furnished after a particular fashion ? that my children shall be educated at a particular seminary ? or that a tree shall be planted in a particular part of my garden ? though none of these actions are to be performed by myself. According to the common sentiments of mankind, the object of volition may be any thing whatever that is believed to be dependent on volition, and there is not the smallest reason for departing in this case from the common sentiments of mankind. As in many other cases, they are more accordant with the true theory of the mind than the doctrines of philosophers.

When we proceed, indeed, to carry any choice into effect, we must unquestionably perform some action ourselves ; but this action, instead of being the object of the choice, may not even be in our view at all at the time when the choice is made. On innumerable occasions we choose things, without ever thinking of the actions we may ultimately have to perform in order to carry our choice into execution.

If no more, indeed, be meant by volition's having



for its object some action of our own, than that the object of volition is something that is conceived to be *dependent* on volition, there cannot be a doubt of the correctness of the proposition ; but this is certainly not the common meaning of the doctrine—that volition has for its object some action of our own.

Besides, volition may have for its object something that is no action at all,—at least in the ordinary meaning of the word action. We may choose that certain things shall continue as they are ; but the continuing of things as they are—their remaining unchanged—is not an action, but the absence of action.

As volition is an exercise of the mind itself, it must be employed only when we see meet to resort to it, and consequently its influence over the other principles of our nature—such as sensation, perception, memory, affections, passions, dispositions, habits, &c.—must be only *occasional*. These principles are merely *physical principles*.\* They operate according to fixed and determinate laws, and would continue to operate by the spontaneous agency of nature, though there were not such a thing as volition in being. This last principle is not necessary to their operating, but to the mind's controlling their operations ; and it exerts over them, of course, an influence that is purely *superintendent*.

Even those operations which are usually styled *voluntary*, do not in every case require the express exercise of volition. They are styled voluntary, not because volition is the source from which they uniform-

\* A physical principle is one which, in so far as the agency of man is concerned, operates *spontaneously*.

ly proceed, but because they are under the general superintendence of this faculty, and controlled by it at our pleasure.

This doctrine, I am aware, is considerably different from that which philosophers usually maintain, for, with almost one voice, they assert, that without volition, a variety of the other principles of our nature would not operate at all: and moreover, that while volition exerts an important influence over these other principles, they, in their turn, exert an equally important influence over it. In short, that it both governs them, and is governed by them,—that it both acts, and is acted upon,—in a way that is utterly inexplicable.

According to the doctrine I have proposed, the philosophy of volition is much more simple. *There is none of the other principles of our nature which, strictly speaking, act on volition at all. It is it which acts on them, and acts only occasionally as we see meet to employ it.\**

It must be observed, however, that I use the term *volition* in its strict and proper sense—to denote some act or effort of the *mind itself*, and not in the vague way in which philosophers frequently use it, to denote operations, in many of which the mind is *passive*. The actions which the mind itself performs lead to so essentially different consequences from those performed by the *physical* principles of our constitution, that

\* The voluntary principle, from its very nature, must be exerted only when we see meet to employ it: in other words, only when we reckon its employment useful or expedient. It is no voluntary principle at all which is exerted in other circumstances.



hardly any thing can be more objectionable, than to rank both under the same denomination. It is difficult, indeed, to advance a single step in expounding the phenomena of mind—particularly those relating to morals—unless our *own* actions, and those of the physical principles of our nature be accurately discriminated, and their relation to each other distinctly understood.

## SECT. II.

### *Volition includes Attention.*

It seems to be directly or indirectly admitted by every one, that *attention* is merely the power of *detaining ideas* in the mind. We frequently speak, for instance, of *attending* to the evidence for one side of a question, without *attending* to that for the other; and in such cases, when we explain ourselves, we always do so by saying that we *keep in view* the evidence for the one side, without keeping in view that for the other, or that we *dwell on* the evidence for the one side, without dwelling on that for the other.

Both Reid and Kames, too, in the passages formerly quoted, plainly regard *attention* as the power of the mind to *detain* its ideas. "A number of thoughts," says Reid, "present themselves to the fancy spontaneously, but if we pay no *attention* to them, nor hold any conference with them, they pass with the crowd." Plainly meaning, that if we pay attention to them, they do not pass with the crowd. And, says Kames, "Though we cannot add to the train an unconnected idea, yet in a measure we can *attend* to some ideas,



and dismiss others."—As plainly meaning, that those which are attended to are not dismissed.\*

Attention, therefore, is included in volition ; or rather, perhaps, I should say, both attention and volition are merely the *voluntary principle* of the mind regarded under different aspects,—attention being this principle, when regarded simply as the power of *detaining* ideas, and volition, when it is regarded as the power of detaining ideas *with a view to something*.

The common sentiments of mankind are utterly incompatible with any other doctrine, than that attention and volition are substantially the same principle. Every act of attention, say philosophers, is *preceded* by some choice, for we never attend to any thing, without choosing that we shall attend to it. This is no doubt specious ; but who does not see that, with equal propriety, we may reverse the proposition, and say, that every choice is *preceded* by some act of attention ? for we never choose any thing, without attending to it. It is manifest, that we no more choose things to which we pay no attention, than we attend to things about which we have no choice. Are we therefore to conclude, that every act of attention is preceded by choice, and also that every choice is preceded by some act of attention ? Unquestionably, not ;

\* I am far, however, from meaning to assert, that the word Attention is *never* applied to any *other* exercise but that of *detaining* ideas. Like most other words of frequent occurrence, it no doubt varies in its application. It is chiefly, however, I imagine, applied to the detention of ideas, and is applied to other exercises only because they are supposed to include some degree of this one, or, at least, to have some resemblance to it.

for no conclusion could be more thoroughly nonsensical. It is the one, however, to which we are directly led, by regarding attention and volition as two different principles. Let us regard them as the same principle, viewed merely under different aspects, and the absurdity is avoided in a moment.—We never attend to any thing without choosing to do so, for attention implies, in its very nature, the exercise of choice; neither do we ever choose any thing without attending to it, for choice, in its very nature, implies the exercise of attention. This view of the subject removes every absurdity.

It is unnecessary, however, to dwell on so plain a case; and I shall therefore proceed to state a few particulars illustrative of the voluntary principle under the aspect of *attention*. The particulars I propose to state are purely elementary.\*

1. If no counteracting cause interfere, we must be able to detain an idea in the mind as long as our attention is directed to it. If attention, for instance, enable us to detain an idea for one point of time, it must equally enable us, if continued in exercise, and not counteracted, to detain it for a second, a third, or a fourth, or for any length of time whatever;—so that the time of detention, in the absence of all counteracting causes, must be the same with the time that the faculty of attention is exerted.

\* I may here remark, that perhaps the best general rule that can be laid down for directing us in our inquiries into the human mind, is, *to resolve the principles by which mankind are usually actuated into their simplest possible elements, and then reason synthetically from these elements to the explanation of the phenomena.*



2. Attention may be counteracted both by the influence of the sensitive and of the associating principles, for either of these principles may suggest such a number of ideas, as to render our attention to any particular one altogether impossible. It hence happens, that while attending to any thing, we do every thing in our power to avoid the interference of these principles. We shut our eyes, we endeavour to have all around us quiet, we shun every thing that is foreign to the subject we are engaged in,—especially every thing of an interesting or agitating nature: And, I may add, we restrain, as much as possible, the process of respiration. Respiration excites very perceptible sensations; and when our attention is much occupied, it is always more or less impeded. If a public speaker succeed in gaining the attention of his auditors, not a breath is heard stirring.

Respiration cannot be impeded for any length of time, without occasioning considerable lassitude: and accordingly we find that attention is a very fatiguing exercise,—so much so, indeed, that when in a weak state of body, we can hardly employ it at all, and even in the most vigorous state, it soon tires us.

3. But the exercise of attention may not only be counteracted by opposing causes, it may also be aided by co-operating ones. While attending to an idea that is kept in the mind either by the sensitive or the associating principle, there are evidently two influences to detain the idea,—the influence of attention, and the influence of sensation or association; and the former must necessarily be assisted by the latter. Accordingly, we find that it is much more easy to attend



to an idea which is kept in the mind by sensation or association, than when there is no such assisting influence. How easily can we attend to the objects of sense, or the objects of some interesting passion, in comparison of the fleeting thoughts that ordinarily occur to us.

It follows, that though the exercise of attention may have always the same power, yet the difficulty of detaining some ideas in comparison of others, may be exceedingly different. In some cases, the influence of attention may be opposed by counteracting causes, in others, it may be aided by co-operating ones; the force of these may be different in all possible degrees, and the difficulty of detaining ideas must differ accordingly. The difficulty of detaining some ideas in comparison of others, has often been taken notice of; and it seems plainly to be owing, at least in part, to the circumstances now mentioned.

4. The exercise of attention, by detaining our ideas, must contribute to their vividness. While attending to an idea suggested by the sensitive principle, there are two influences to keep the idea in the mind,—the influence of the sensitive principle, and the influence of attention; and both together must have greater power to render the idea vivid, than the sensitive principle alone has. While attending to an idea suggested by the associating principle, there are likewise two influences to keep the idea in the mind,—the influence of the associating principle, and the influence of attention; and, exactly as in the former case, both together must have greater power to render the idea vivid, than the associating principle alone has.

But, independently of these considerations, the ex-

ercise of attention must contribute to the vividness of our ideas. In many cases, ideas are faint merely because they are of momentary duration, and would be sufficiently vivid, were their duration prolonged. Now attention, from its very nature, prolongs the duration of ideas, and of course must promote their vividness. Experience abundantly shows, that attention renders our ideas more vivid.

The longer an idea is detained in the mind by the power of attention, the longer,—other things being equal,—will the principle of association detain it afterwards. This necessarily follows, from what was stated in the preceding chapter; for it was there shown, that the longer an idea remains in the mind at any time, the longer,—other things being equal,—will the principle of association make it remain at any other. It hence follows, that the more vivid an idea is rendered by the power of attention, the more vividly,—other things being equal,—will the principle of association afterwards present it.

As attention contributes to the vividness of the ideas to which it is directed, it must diminish the vividness of all coexisting ones, or totally exclude them. This observation results from a remark in the first chapter,—that the mind has a tendency to possess only a certain *quantum* of ideas, and that if any of them has its vividness augmented, the others which are along with it have their vividness impaired, or are altogether set aside. We find, in reality, that while attending to any thing, our ideas of other things are impaired or set aside.

5. Ideas suggested by the sensitive and associating principles, are many of them presented in a state of



*combination*, and it is often desirable to have them detached from each other and presented *separately*. The exercise of attention enables us in many cases to do this very effectually. I look for example to an object before me, and the impression on my eye excites an idea of its different parts. I direct my attention to the idea of one of these parts, and on shutting my eye the ideas of the others vanish, but the idea of that one is detained, and consequently separated from the others. In like manner may an idea suggested by association be separated from others. The power of attention can detain it after the others have disappeared.

It does not always happen, however, that attention is able to separate our ideas, for some of them have acquired such power to suggest others, that however long they be detained themselves, they detain these others along with them, and consequently their separation is prevented. Many instances of this occur. We cannot detain the idea of *colour*, without detaining along with it some idea of *extension*, and hence we cannot separate the idea of *colour* from all idea of *extension*. We cannot detain the idea of *length* without detaining along with it some idea of *breadth*; and hence we cannot separate the idea of *length* from all idea of *breadth*. We cannot easily detain the ideas of the common words of our native language, without detaining along with them the ideas which they signify; and hence we cannot easily separate the *words* of our native language from the *ideas* which they signify. And in all cases without exception, when an idea has been long associated with others, it is difficult or impossible to detain the former without also



detaining the latter, and of course it is difficult or impossible to separate the former from the latter.

When the exercise of attention has effected a separation among our ideas, the principle of association must have a tendency to present them separately afterwards. This is an obvious consequence, for though an idea is separated from its *usual* associates, it must still coexist with others; and, of course, when these others recur, *it* must have a tendency also to recur, and therefore to exist apart from its usual associates. Hence it happens, that in separating the combinations of our ideas, we always experience most difficulty at first, and that after repeated separations we experience little or no difficulty at all. Every time the separation is effected, the principle of association increases their tendency to occur separately afterwards, and by numerous repetitions it may increase this tendency to such a degree, as to make them occur separately without any effort of attention whatever.

6. As the exercise of attention promotes the vividness of ideas, and separates their combinations, it must have a tendency to add to their *distinctness*. It is almost unnecessary to remark, how exactly this observation accords with experience. Every person knows that we render our ideas more distinct by attending to them.

When our ideas are rendered distinct by the exercise of attention, the law of association must have a tendency to present them in a state of distinctness afterwards. This evidently follows from what has been already stated, and it as completely accords with experience as the former observation. When we enter

on the study of any new subject, we always feel much perplexity *at first*. Every thing appears to us obscure and intricate, and yet if we have resolution to persevere, we gradually find things assuming an aspect of more and more distinctness, till at last they become as definite as matters the most evident.

7. The exercise of attention must facilitate the labour of committing things to memory. Stewart goes so far as to maintain, that without attention there can be no memory at all; but though this is certainly going to an extreme, yet beyond all doubt attention must be highly useful to memory. To advert only to a single consideration. In learning a train of ideas, it is evidently of importance to weaken or exclude all extraneous ones, for these can serve no other purpose than to draw away the mind from the subject it has in view; and attention, by detaining the ideas to which it is directed, and increasing their vividness, must infallibly weaken or exclude all extraneous ones.

8. The exercise of attention must facilitate the recollection of any thing formerly committed to memory. Here, too, I shall advert only to a single consideration. In trying to recollect what has been formerly in our minds, it is evidently of importance to prevent our thoughts from wandering at large, and to confine them as much as possible to things connected with what we are in search of: And as attention detains the ideas to which it is directed, it is the very power which is wanted to impose on our thoughts the necessary restriction.

9. Every one knows that we cannot by any direct effort either *introduce* an idea into the mind, or *ex-*



*clude* one from it. The making a direct effort to introduce an idea is manifestly preposterous, for such an effort would imply that the idea is already in the mind, and does not need to be introduced. A direct effort to exclude an idea is, if possible, still more preposterous, for all the time the effort is continued the idea will likewise be continued, and be detained instead of excluded. It is only by proceeding indirectly, and taking advantage of the law of association, that we can accomplish either purpose. The mode of proceeding is obviously this:—When we wish to introduce an idea, we turn our attention to some of the ideas with which it is connected, (and we must have such ideas, else we could have no thought of the matter at all). By doing so, the tendency of these ideas to suggest the one we are in search of is increased, and, of course, if circumstances be not very unfavourable, we may expect they will actually suggest it. When we wish to exclude an idea we reverse the process,—we turn our attention to some other ideas with which it is little or nowise connected. These have their tendency to suggest their associates augmented, and by suggesting them may lead the mind to such a train of thought as totally to banish the one we are wishing to get rid of.

10. Attention is of great use for enabling us to form *new combinations* of ideas. The mode in which the mind forms new combinations, has very much engaged the curiosity of philosophers, but they have nevertheless given a most imperfect account of it. They tell us, indeed, that the exercise of *conception* is necessary to give us a notion of the ideas we are to com-



bine, the exercise of *abstraction* to separate them from their former associates, and *judgment* and *taste*, to inform us what ideas to select for our new assortment. But in this account the main question is evidently evaded. For after having formed a conception of the ideas, having separated them from their associates, and being enabled by judgment and taste to make a proper selection, how are we to proceed in forming our new aggregate? Judgment and taste may tell us what ideas we are to combine, but surely these faculties,—if faculties they are to be called,—do not *form* the combination. By what means is it formed? To this question philosophers hardly give any answer, nor on their principles would it be easily answered. The power which attention gives us over our ideas enables us to answer it with great readiness.

1. Suppose that a person has obtained ideas of a number of *successive events*, and that he means to arrange his ideas according to the order of the time in which the events took place. His mode of proceeding will be this. If the idea of the first event do not readily occur to his mind, he will direct his attention to some of the ideas with which it is connected—(and he must have such ideas, else he could have no thought of the matter at all)—and continue his attention until it occur. He will adopt the same course with the idea of the second event. If it do not readily occur to him, he will direct his attention to some of the ideas with which it is connected, and continue his attention until he obtain it. Having now in his mind ideas of both events, and of both at the same time, he will direct his attention to the idea of the

first, and immediately after to that of the second; and the idea of the first will thus acquire greater power to suggest the idea of the second, than the idea of the second to suggest the idea of the first. In like manner, will he make the idea of the second event acquire greater power to suggest the idea of the third, than the idea of the third the idea of the second, and so on. Hence, after proceeding to the idea of the last event, he will find it easier to go over the ideas in the order of the time in which the events took place, than in any other. By repeatedly going over the ideas in this order, he will increase the facility of their future suggestion according to it, and at last bring them into such a state that, immediately upon the occurrence of the first idea, all the rest will be successively suggested in the way he requires.

2. Suppose that a person has obtained ideas of a number of objects—A, B, C, and D,—and that he means to arrange them in such a way that A shall be conceived to be nearest him, B next, C next, and D farthest off. This case is different from the former, as the arrangement has no dependence on the principle of *succession*, but on that of *local situation*. Nor is it of any consequence with what idea the person begin—whether with that of A, with that of B, with that of C, or with that of D,—for with whichever of them he begin, the arrangement may be completed with equal accuracy.

Let us suppose him to begin with the idea of A: Then if this idea do not readily occur to his mind, he will direct his attention to some of the ideas with which it is connected, and continue his attention un-



til it occur. If, along with the idea of A, there do not occur the idea of A's being situated near him, he will renew his attention until there occur such an idea. Having now ideas both of A and of A's situation, and having both in his mind at the same time, each of them will acquire power to suggest the other. He will direct his attention to both, and being *detained together* for some time, their mutual suggesting power will be increased, and by continuing or repeating his attention to them, they may become at last so firmly *conjoined*, that whenever one of them afterwards occurs, the other will be sure to occur in connexion with it.

Let us now suppose him to proceed to the idea of B: And if this idea do not readily occur to him, he will adopt the same course as with that of A. He will direct his attention to some of the ideas with which that of B is connected, and continue his attention until he obtain it. If there do not now occur the idea of B's being situated at a greater distance from him than A, he will renew his attention until there occur such an idea. He will then direct his attention to both ideas, and their reciprocal suggesting influence will be increased; and by continuing or repeating his attention, he may conjoin them so firmly, that no sooner does one of them occur at any future period, than the other will appear in connexion with it.

In like manner may ideas of C and D, and of their respective situations, be obtained and conjoined with one another, and the whole class arranged and fixed in their proper positions, according to the principle originally proposed.

3. Suppose that a person has obtained ideas of a



number of objects—A, B, C, and D, and that he means to arrange his ideas in such a way that A shall be conceived to exist a week hence, B two weeks hence, C three weeks hence, and D four weeks hence. This case differs from the last as it refers to *time* instead of *place*; but it is so completely analogous, as to render illustration unnecessary.

The practice of committing our ideas to *writing*, tends greatly to assist us in forming them into new combinations. When the whole process is mental, an idea is no sooner placed where we wish it, than it is apt to disappear; and though it may again be recalled by the exercise of attention, and inserted in its proper position, yet when the ideas are numerous, the labour becomes so great, and must be so often repeated, as to be utterly intolerable. The committing things to writing materially abridges the labour, secures every idea in its proper place, when once put in it, and allows us to pause or to go forward as we judge expedient.

From some very common modes of speaking, we should be apt to conclude, that there are other things besides ideas which are objects of attention, for nothing is more common than to speak of attending to things which, in no sense of the word, can be called ideas. This conclusion, however, I am inclined to believe, is altogether erroneous, and that it is never but to ideas that our attention is directed.

1. It is universally allowed that we never attend to any object without having an idea of it, and also that we are very apt to confound the idea and the object with one another. It is of no consequence at

present to inquire how this aptitude or propensity originates. Its existence is indubitable, however it may originate, and it completely accounts for the modes of speaking referred to.

2. In many cases we are said to attend to objects, when every person must admit, that we attend only to ideas. We often speak of attending to objects which are *past*, or *future*, and even to objects which are merely *conceived*, and which are neither past, present, nor future. Now surely in these cases, it must be the ideas of the objects that occupy our attention. In the first instance, the objects have gone out of existence, and, at the time we are said to be attending to them, are mere *nonentities*. In the second, the objects are not yet come into existence, and are likewise, at the time we are said to be attending to them, mere *nonentities*. In the third, the objects always were and always will be mere nonentities. In other words, all the objects at the time we are said to be attending to them are nothing whatever, for a thing that has no existence is nothing at all. There is unquestionably *something*, however, to which our attention is directed. What is this something? It can be nothing but the ideas of the objects in our own minds. In a great many cases, therefore, when we are said to be attending to *things*, we are only attending to *ideas of them*; and why not believe that this happens in every case? The phenomena are perfectly agreeable to such a supposition, and it seems very unreasonable to resort to any other.

3. When our attention is directed to any object, we always find that our ideas of it become more vivid



and distinct. If the ideas be the things that engage our attention, these are the very results that should take place ; for our ideas are always rendered more vivid and distinct by being attended to. But if it be not the ideas but the object itself that engages our attention, the facts are very inexplicable. Our ideas are altogether different from their objects, and that attention to one thing should promote the vividness and distinctness of another altogether different, is what cannot be accounted for on any known principle.

4. It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand what is meant by attending to any thing except ideas. We can easily understand what is meant by attending to a sensation, to a conception, or to any other kind of *thought* ; but the meaning of attending to any thing else is not a little puzzling. The exercise of attention is something *within* the mind, every thing else but ideas is *out of* the mind ; and how the one can act on the other in any other way than through the medium of ideas, it is not easy to comprehend.

### SECT. III.

#### *Attention includes Abstraction.*

*Abstraction* is said to be that faculty by which the mind *separates* the combinations of its ideas, and it is always regarded as an original faculty. I confess, however, that I can see no reason for reckoning it original. The exercise of attention, as already shown, can in many cases enable us to separate the combinations of our ideas ; and whenever we are unable to



separate them in this way, we are equally unable to separate them in any other. No person is able by an effort of attention to separate the idea of *colour* from the idea of *extension*, or the idea of *length* from the idea of *breadth*; and the same combinations he is equally unable to separate by means of *abstraction*. Indeed the common judgment of mankind clearly refers the separations which the mind effects among its ideas to no other exercise than that of *attention*; and even those who contend most strenuously for abstraction as an original principle, do the same thing whenever they are off their guard. "It seems that we cannot generalize," says Dr Reid, "without some degree of abstraction; but I apprehend we may abstract without generalizing: for what hinders me from *attending* to the whiteness of the paper before me, without applying that colour to any other object?" It is perfectly manifest, that Reid in this passage speaks of attention as including abstraction.

Stewart is, if possible, still more explicit. "The classification of different objects," says he, "supposes a power of *attending* to some of their qualities or attributes, without *attending* to the rest; for no two objects are to be found without some specific difference, and no assortment or arrangement can be formed among things not perfectly alike, but by losing sight of their distinguishing peculiarities, and limiting the *attention* to those attributes which belong to them in common. Indeed without this power of *attending* separately to things which our senses present to us, in a state of union, we never could have any idea of number." Stewart brings forward this passage

to show the influence of abstraction, in enabling us to arrange things into classes; and though his doctrine on this point seems very untenable, yet every one must see that he considers abstraction as included in attention.

Though the mind *itself*, however, cannot separate the combinations of its ideas, but by means of attention, yet there are certainly other means by which they may be separated. I look, for instance, to an object before me, and the impression on my eye suggests ideas of its different parts. In a minute or two the whole of the object is removed from my view, except one of its parts, and the ideas of the parts removed vanish, while that of the remaining one continues, and is thus separated from them. Here, however, there was no exercise of attention, but merely an alteration in the impression on my eye.

A similar result may be produced by association, for it is certainly possible for association to suggest an idea of one part of an object, without suggesting ideas of the others; and both organic impressions, therefore, and the law of association, must be considered as capable, in certain circumstances, of effecting separations among our ideas. But to such separations we never give the name of *abstractions*. Abstraction always refers to separations *effected by the mind itself*.

The appearances of abstraction exhibited by the lower animals, are entirely owing, I apprehend, to separations effected by organic impressions and the law of association. This will appear more clearly afterwards.



Ideas may be *distinguished* from each other, which we find it impossible to *separate*. We know, for instance, that the idea of *colour* is not the idea of *extension*; that is, we can *distinguish* the idea of colour from the idea of extension, but we cannot separate the idea of colour from the idea of extension. We know that the idea of *length* is not the idea of *breadth*; that is, we can *distinguish* the idea of length from the idea of breadth, but we cannot separate the idea of length from the idea of breadth. Abstraction, therefore, is not necessary to enable us to *distinguish* ideas from each other.

And as we can distinguish ideas which we cannot separate, so we can give *distinct names* to ideas which we cannot separate. We can give a distinct name to the idea of colour, and another to the idea of extension, though we cannot separate the idea of colour from the idea of extension: And we can give a distinct name to the idea of length, and another to the idea of breadth, though we cannot separate the idea of length from the idea of breadth. Abstraction, therefore, is not necessary to enable us to give distinct names to inseparable ideas.

We can likewise carry on *distinct processes of reasoning* respecting ideas, which we cannot separate. We can carry on a distinct process of reasoning concerning the idea of colour, and another concerning the idea of extension, though we cannot separate the idea of colour from the idea of extension: And we can carry on a distinct process of reasoning concerning the idea of length, and another concerning the idea of breadth, though we cannot separate the idea of length



from the idea of breadth. Abstraction therefore is not necessary to our carrying on distinct processes of reasoning concerning inseparable ideas.

We can observe, too, *a resemblance* between similar ideas, though we cannot separate them from dissimilar ones with which they are connected. We can observe *a resemblance* between the colour of one object and the colour of another, though we cannot observe the colour of either apart from other circumstances: And we can observe a resemblance between the length of one object and the length of another, though we cannot observe the length of either apart from other circumstances. Abstraction, therefore, is not necessary to enable us to observe a similarity among ideas which are inseparable from others.

We can also assign the *same name* to similar ideas, and consequently form *general terms*, although we cannot separate the similar ideas from dissimilar ones connected with them. We can assign the *same name* to the colour of one object which we assign to the colour of another, though we cannot conceive the colour of either apart from other circumstances: And we can assign the *same name* to the length of one object, which we assign to the length of another, though we cannot conceive the length of either apart from other circumstances. Abstraction, therefore, is not necessary for enabling us to give the *same name* to similar ideas. In other words,—in opposition to the universally received doctrine,—abstraction is not necessary to *the formation of general terms*.

Finally, We can assign the same name to *objects* which suggest similar ideas, though we cannot sepa-

rate the similar ideas from dissimilar ones connected with them. We can call certain men *Blacks*,—meaning not the quality blackness, but people whose complexion is black,—though we cannot separate the idea of their colour from other ideas: And we can call other men *Whites*,—meaning people whose complexion is white,—though we cannot separate the idea of their whiteness from other ideas. Abstraction, therefore, is not necessary for enabling us to give the same name to objects which suggest similar ideas. And on this account likewise it appears that abstraction is not necessary to the formation of general terms.

It must be remembered, however, that in all these observations I use the word *abstraction* in its strict and proper sense,—to signify the mind's *separating* its ideas from each other—and not in the vague acceptance in which it is commonly used. Some of the most celebrated writers seem to employ the term *abstraction* without any definite meaning whatever. Stewart, for instance, defines abstraction to be that power of the understanding by which it separates the combinations presented to it, and yet in the very next page he tells us, “that we can reason concerning one quality or property of an object *abstracted* from the rest, while at the same time, we find it impossible to *conceive it separately*.” What is the meaning of the word *abstracted* in this sentence? According to the definition, it should mean that an idea or conception of something is separated from the other conceptions with which it is usually combined. But it is an obvious contradiction to say, that we can reason concerning a



quality of an object conceived separately from the rest, while we find it impossible to conceive it separately.

There appear to be no less than four or five different meanings, which philosophers annex to the term abstraction. Its proper meaning is that which I have already mentioned,—the mind's separating the combinations of its ideas,—and this is the meaning which is always given when a *formal definition* is proposed. On many occasions, however, it is employed to mean no more than the mind's *attending* to some quality of an object without attending to its other qualities,—an operation, as we have already seen, which implies no separation of ideas at all. A third meaning is—the mind's *distinguishing* ideas from one another that exist in combination. But neither is there here any separation of ideas. In reality, instead of separating combined ideas before we distinguish them, the process is the very reverse. We must distinguish them before we can separate them; for how can we proceed to effect their separation unless we previously know the one from the other?

It is in a great measure owing, I apprehend, to the variety of meanings annexed to the term *abstraction*, that so much difficulty is felt in explaining what are usually called general or abstract ideas.

#### SECT. IV.

##### *General Ideas.*

ONE of the purposes of language is to suggest ideas, and it has been often made a question, What



is the nature of the ideas which are suggested when we employ general terms? The ideas suggested by proper names,—such as *Peter, James, John*,—are quite obvious, for they are merely ideas of particular individuals; but when we employ general words,—such as *man, house, mountain*,—the matter is not so evident. The difficulties with regard to this last class of words seem chiefly to arise from the two following sources.

1. The practice of speaking of a number of individuals, as possessing *in common the same attributes*. Nothing is more usual than to say that general words refer to attributes, which belong *in common* to a number of individuals, or that they refer to individuals which possess a number of attributes *in common*. These attributes are styled *general attributes*, and the ideas we obtain of them are styled *general ideas*. But how is it possible, may it not be asked, for a number of individuals to possess in common the *same* attributes? Has not every individual its own attributes? And are not the attributes of every individual as distinct from those of every other, as the individuals themselves are? The whiteness of this sheet of paper is surely not the same property with the whiteness of that, nor the whiteness of that with the whiteness of a third. A *general attribute*, therefore, and consequently a *general idea*, seems as impossible as a general individual. This difficulty is easily solved.

Our saying that a number of individuals possess *in common the same attributes*, means no more than that they all possess *similar attributes*. Our styling the attributes *general*, has the very same meaning. This

sheet of paper, we say, possesses the general attribute denoted by the word *whiteness*, and by such language we mean nothing but that this sheet of paper is *white*, as well as many other things are. A *general idea* is merely an idea of a general attribute, or an attribute which may be general. That is, it is the idea of an attribute which is viewed as belonging, or which may be viewed as belonging, to a *number* of individuals. All such modes of speaking are somewhat inaccurate; but we must either take them as they are, and endeavour to understand them, or resort to a phraseology in the highest degree awkward.

2. But the chief difficulty with regard to the import of general terms, arises from the inaccurate opinions which prevail on the subject of *abstraction*. A general term never denotes all the attributes of an object, but merely a part of them; and abstraction, it is said, enables us to distinguish the one set from the other, and thus to obtain an idea of what is denoted by the term. Such an idea, it is further said, being obtained by abstraction, may be styled an *abstract idea*, and the term itself may be styled an *abstract term*. This account is considerably specious, but if we follow it to its consequences, it will be found to involve us in inextricable perplexity. For what, it may be asked, is the abstract idea denoted by the general word *triangle*? As Berkley well remarks, it must be the idea of a triangle, which is neither oblique, nor rectangular, equilateral, nor equicrural, but all and none of these at once. But how can any person form an idea of such a figure?

On the other hand, if we allege that abstraction is



not necessary to our obtaining the ideas denoted by general words, we seem to be involved in as much perplexity as ever. The word *triangle* certainly has a meaning, and it as certainly does not mean either a right-angled triangle, or an obtuse-angled triangle, or an acute-angled triangle. What then does it mean, but something that is common to all triangles? and how can we know what is common to all triangles, unless by abstraction we distinguish what is common to them all, from what is peculiar to each? In other words, unless we obtain an abstract idea of a triangle.

Now, in both these cases, it is plainly taken for granted, that we cannot *distinguish* the ideas of the different attributes of the same object, but by means of abstraction,—a notion for which there is not the slightest evidence, but the misconceptions of philosophers. Who, for instance, can *abstract* (or *separate*) the idea of length from all idea of breadth? Yet nothing is more easy than to *distinguish* the idea of length from the idea of breadth. Who can *abstract* (or *separate*) the idea of colour from all idea of extension? Yet nothing is more easy than to *distinguish* the idea of colour from the idea of extension. In fact, as I have already remarked, instead of abstraction's being necessary to our *distinguishing* ideas, it is our distinguishing ideas that is necessary to abstraction; for how can we proceed to *abstract* (or *separate*) one idea from another, unless we have previously *distinguished* the one from the other?

If we lay aside the notion of abstraction's being necessary to our distinguishing the ideas of the differ-



ent attributes of the same object, the whole difficulty entirely evanishes. Thus: though our ideas of the attributes common to all triangles are uniformly combined with ideas of the attributes peculiar to some individual, yet we easily *distinguish* the former from the latter, and, of course, easily obtain an idea of what is common to all triangles. This idea is not an *abstract* one, for it is combined with a variety of others, from which it cannot possibly be abstracted, but it is nevertheless exceedingly distinct, and enables us to know, with perfect accuracy, the meaning annexed to the general word *triangle*. A mere child, indeed, can *distinguish* the common from the individual attributes of such figures, and know the import of the general terms which denote them.

To examine the import of a few other general terms. When we say that such a person is a *man*, we mean that he possesses the attributes which characterize a human being; and we have an idea of the meaning of this term, when we have an idea of the attributes which characterize a human being. Such an idea, however, never exists *abstractedly* or separately from all others, for it is uniformly combined with ideas of attributes which belong, or may belong, to some particular individual. But this circumstance is of no manner of consequence. If we have ideas of the attributes which characterize a human being, we are at perfect liberty, in as far as the meaning of the term is concerned, to have, in combination with them, ideas of any other attributes that may occur to us. We may conceive the person to be either tall or short, straight or crooked, wise or foolish, learned or ignorant. None

of these things are denoted by the term, but neither are they excluded by it, and we may conceive of them as we please. It is the greatest error imaginable, to conclude, that because a word denotes certain attributes, or an object possessed of certain attributes, we must, in forming an idea of its meaning, restrict ourselves to the conception of these attributes *alone*. In many cases, such restriction is absolutely impossible, and in all, it is totally unnecessary.

Let us take another example—the word *whiteness*. This word denotes a certain well-known colour, and it denotes nothing else; but, in forming an idea of what it denotes, it is by no means necessary that the idea of the colour be *abstracted*, or separated from all other ideas. We form an idea of what it denotes, when we form an idea of *whiteness*, whatever be the other ideas combined with it: and the fact certainly is, that people possessed of sight never have an idea of *whiteness*, nor of any other colour, without having it combined with an idea of some portion of extension.

The next word I shall advert to, is one which denotes something of which we have only a *relative idea*—the word *caloric*. This word denotes what is known to us merely by its effects, as that it produces the sensation of heat in animated beings, the expansion of certain bodies, the contraction of others, and so on; and we form an idea of what it denotes, when we form an idea of its being something which produces these effects. Our idea, therefore, is purely *relative*, and not like that of length, breadth, or thickness, which is direct or positive. Relative, however, though it is, and not separable from others, it is so



perfectly distinct, that it enables us to distinguish its object as effectually as the most positive idea we can obtain. In reality, things are often distinguished by their relations to other things, more completely than by their own inherent properties.

The word *all* denotes something of which, in certain cases, we have a positive, and in others only a relative idea. When we say, with regard to a few persons,—three or four, for example,—that they are *all* mortal, we can evidently form a positive idea of the import of the word *all*, for we can form an idea of every individual to which it applies. But when, in reference to mankind at large, we say, *all* are mortal, we cannot form such an idea. The only idea we can form is that of a certain fact,—to wit, that *not one* is exempted from mortality,—and of the relation of mankind to this fact. Our idea, therefore, is quite relative, and necessarily connected with others; but neither of these circumstances prevents its distinctness, for so remarkably distinct is it, that, were even a single individual exempted from mortality, there is no person but would detect the incorrectness of our statement.

It is quite unnecessary, I imagine, to give other instances. Those now mentioned, seem abundantly sufficient to show, that, if the prevailing doctrine concerning *abstraction* be laid aside, our general ideas,—that is, our ideas of the import of general terms,—sent no difficulty that can embarrass any one. They are not obtained by *abstraction* at all, but by an operation so simple and easy,—our observing the *similar properties* of objects,—that the merest child can per-



form it. This last circumstance, we should think, might have satisfied philosophers of the unsoundness of their doctrine. If abstraction be the source of our general ideas, the more general the idea, the greater must be the effort of abstraction that is necessary; but so contrary is all this to experience, that children have ideas of the import of some of the most general words in language, without being conscious of any effort whatever. The words *being*, *something*, *nothing*, *body*, *animal*, and such like, are amongst the most extensive which language contains, and yet a child can employ them quite accurately.

It is a maxim in Logic, that the more *extensive* any general term is, it is the less *comprehensive*; in other words, that the more general any term is, the fewer are the attributes which it denotes. But though this maxim is certainly well founded, it by no means follows that when we employ a more general term, there are ideas of fewer attributes presented to our minds than when we employ a less general one. Our ideas of the import of general words, as already remarked, always exist in combination with others, and consequently though a very general word denotes but few attributes, yet our ideas of them and their *concomitants* may *together* amount to as great a number as those suggested by the most specific word. The word *animal* is a more general term than the word *horse*, yet when we hear the word *animal* pronounced, it may be the idea of a horse that is actually suggested to us. The word *man* is more general than the word *Peter*, which, being a proper name, denotes merely an individual; yet when we hear the word *man*, it

may be the idea of *Peter* we obtain. The truth is, that however general the term, it is almost always the idea of some individual object that is suggested, and consequently we almost always obtain ideas of all the attributes of some individual object.

The difference among terms in respect of their *comprehensiveness*, is merely this,—that the more general the term, there is the greater *latitude* with regard to the *kind* of ideas that may be suggested. When we employ the word *animal*, we may form an idea either of a *cow*, of a *dog*, of a *lion*, of a *sheep*, or of any other animal whatever ; whereas, when we employ the word *horse*, we can form an idea of an individual of only a particular species. When we employ the word *man*, we may form an idea either of a white, or of a black man, either of a tall or of a short man, either of a wise or of a foolish man ; whereas, when we employ the word *Peter*, we are restricted to the idea of a particular individual. In short, if we keep in view the fact, that our ideas of the import of general terms are not *abstracted* from others, but exist in conjunction with them, the whole mystery with regard to them will disappear in a moment. It is the misapprehensions of philosophers concerning *abstraction*, and not the difficulties of the subject itself, that have involved this part of mental science in so much perplexity.

There are two other questions concerning general ideas which deserve attention. The one is, Are the *objects* of general ideas things that *really exist* ? The other, Can general ideas without the use of words enable us to conduct any general investigation ? These questions, as every one knows, have occasioned much



controversy among philosophers, and I shall here endeavour to answer them.

With regard to the *first* question, there cannot, I imagine, be a doubt, that the objects of *many* general ideas are things really existing. The word *whiteness*, for instance, suggests a certain idea, the object of which is a certain general attribute, and such an attribute is undoubtedly a thing *really existing*. The word *length* also suggests a certain idea, the object of which is a certain other general attribute, and this attribute likewise has undoubtedly *a real existence*. The case is the same with many other general ideas. They have general attributes for their objects, and these attributes have *a real existence* as much as any thing else has. It would be strange indeed, if the attributes which we witness all around us had *no being*. In fact, though we may form ideas of *combinations* of attributes which have no real existence, yet every simple attribute of which we form an idea has unquestionably a real existence.

It has been said, I know, that every thing that exists is *an individual*, and that there cannot possibly be such a thing as a *general* existence; but this is nothing but a miserable quibble founded on the imperfection of language. Though every thing that exists may certainly, in one sense, be styled an individual, yet in another equally frequent, and equally well understood, there are many things existing which may be styled general. Is any thing more common than to say, that such attributes exist very *generally*; that such objects possess certain attributes *in common*; that such other objects possess the *same attributes*?



It is only in the sense of these propositions that there are *general existences*, which are the objects of general ideas; and to urge as an objection, that every thing which exists is an individual, is not to attack any tenet of philosophy, true or false, but merely to find fault with a very common and very convenient mode of speaking.

But though, in many instances, general ideas have for their objects things really existing, I am far from maintaining that this is the case in every instance; for, beyond all question, many general ideas have no objects at all. We can easily, for example, form an idea of a golden mountain, but such a mountain has no existence any where but in our own imaginations. It is merely an idea in our own mind, and has no object whatever. Dr Reid, indeed, in defending the opinions of the *Conceptualists*, alleges that general ideas or conceptions have always objects; but that, on many occasions, the objects are things which do not exist; and this notion appears to be a great favourite with him. It is a notion, however, which involves as plain a contradiction as ever was uttered. A thing which has no real existence is nothing at all. It is an absolute *nonentity*, and can neither be the object of a general idea nor of any thing else. General ideas, and indeed all sorts of ideas which have not things *really existing* for their objects, have no objects of any kind. They are mere creatures of the mind, and it is the ideas themselves which are mistaken for objects.

“When millions of intellects,” asks Dr Price, “contemplate the equality of every angle of a semi-

circle to a right angle, have they not all the same object in view? Is this object nothing? or is it only an image or kind of shadow?" These questions are easily answered.

When millions of intellects contemplate the equality of every angle of a semicircle to a right angle, they are merely attending to ideas or conceptions in their own minds. They may be said to have all the *same* object in view, as the ideas or conceptions in all their minds are *similar*. This object is something, for the ideas or conceptions they are attending to have certainly a being. If angles and semicircles have a real existence—and they must have a real existence, as I shall afterwards show, if space has a real existence—the object is an *image*, or kind of *shadow* of them, for it has to them a *seeming resemblance*. If angles and semicircles have no real existence, the object is neither an image nor shadow, for an image or shadow must be an image or shadow of something.

The circumstance which has puzzled Dr Price so much, is one which is far from being unfrequent in the operations of the mind,—our regarding the properties of one thing as belonging to another, and then reasoning from that other as if it really possessed these properties. Thus, we can regard the letters of the alphabet as possessing the properties of living creatures; and having done so, can reason from them as successfully as if they were actually living creatures. When we say *all X's* are mortal, Z is an X, therefore Z is mortal; our reasoning is just as valid as when we say *all men* are mortal, Peter is a man, therefore Peter is mortal. Would Dr Price imagine



that there is any wonderful mystery in this case concealed under X and Z? As little mystery is there under the ideas he refers to. If once we regard ideas as possessing the properties of outward objects,—and when we contemplate in thought the equality of every angle of a semicircle to a right angle, we regard them in this light,—it is manifest that we can reason from ideas as effectually as if they were really outward objects.

General attributes are necessary to our arranging things into classes, for there can be no classification without common attributes, nor any individual of a class without possessing these attributes. Our having *ideas* of the general attributes of things, is no less necessary; for whatever common attributes things may possess, if we have not ideas of them, they cannot assist us in our classifications. Locke, in expounding what he calls the nominal essence of things, by which he means nothing but our ideas of their common attributes,—has some excellent observations on this point.

The other question, Can we conduct any general investigation without the assistance of words or other signs?—seems to admit of a still more simple answer. If we have ideas of the general attributes of things, it seems quite indisputable, that without farther aid, we can conduct any kind of investigation we please. I wish, for instance, to ascertain the effects of burning bodies on atmospheric air. For this purpose, I inclose a candle in a vessel that is air-tight, and allow it to burn till it is extinguished. I then examine the state of the air, and find that it has lost its oxy-



gen. I employ a variety of other burning bodies in the same way, and find that they likewise consume the oxygen of the air: and hence I draw this general conclusion, that the effect of all burning bodies is to consume the oxygen of the air. Now, where the necessity for words is, or any other kind of sign to enable me to form this conclusion, I am utterly at a loss to imagine. The whole process has so little concern with words or signs, that to allege their necessity, seems to be one of the most extravagant paradoxes that ever was promulgated. Even in *reasoning*—at least as the term is often understood—there does not appear any necessity for words, although, as I have already remarked, we frequently ascribe to words the attributes of things, and then employ them in our reasoning as if they were really things.

In reasoning concerning any attribute, there are plainly two courses which we may adopt. We may consider the attribute in connexion with the object to which it belongs, or we may consider it in connexion with something else,—with the word, for example, which denotes it. In the first way, it is impossible to proceed with any thing like an undivided attention, as the other attributes of the object, being in our view, must be ever apt to draw our thoughts aside. In the second, all extraneous circumstances are, in a great measure, excluded. The word is before us to fix our attention, and by referring the attribute to it, we have a subject of inquiry at once distinct and simple. When we say, for example, all X's must die, Z is an X, therefore Z must die; the conclusion is manifestly equally accurate, whether we re-

fer the attribute to the things denoted by X and Z, or to X and Z themselves—while the latter method has the advantage of saving us the trouble of attending to any thing but what is immediately before us.

Stewart, in his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, adduces this syllogism to prove that we may carry on a train of reasoning by means of signs without resorting to ideas at all; but it is certainly far from proving any such doctrine. It is true, we can perceive the force of the syllogism without having any idea of what is meant by the letter X, and likewise without having any idea of the *nature* of the attribute expressed by the word *die*. But we must unquestionably have an idea that the word *die* expresses some attribute or other. We must likewise have an idea of what is meant by the word *all*, also of what is meant by Z's being an X, or we cannot advance a step. In short, instead of proving, as Stewart imagines, "that the assent we give to the conclusion of a syllogism does not result from any examination of the *notions* expressed by the different propositions of which it is composed, but is an immediate consequence of the relations in which the words stand to each other," the whole that it proves is the doctrine already stated,—that we may ascribe the attributes of things to the words which denote them, and then carry on our reasoning as if they were ascribed to the things themselves.

It also deserves attention, that though in the case of such a syllogism as the foregoing, it is sufficient to know that the word *die* expresses an attribute without knowing the exact nature of the attribute; yet,



in other cases, the knowledge of the exact nature of the attribute is often indispensable. When we say that A is equal to B, ( $A=B$ ), therefore B is equal to A, ( $B=A$ ), it is quite evident that we must know what is meant by the *equality* of B to A; in other words, must know the nature of the attribute we ascribe to A, else we can draw no conclusion whatever. Were we to mistake the meaning of the word *equality*, and to suppose that it has the same import with the word *greater*, the conclusion, instead of being true, would be the very opposite; for the reasoning would then be, A is greater than B, ( $A>B$ ), therefore B is greater than A, ( $B>A$ ). Upon the whole, it appears evident, that the substituting words for things by no means supersedes the necessity of forming *ideas* of the import of the propositions we make use of in reasoning. It only saves us the trouble of forming ideas of the import of *every word* of which the propositions are composed.

Philosophers, in respect of their sentiments concerning general ideas, have long been divided into *three sects*,—*Realists*, *Conceptualists*, and *Nominalists*.

The *Realists* maintain, that our general ideas have for their objects *general natures*, or *essences really existing*; that these natures are at the foundation of all our distributions of things into genera and species; that they belong to every individual of the genera and species, and are to be considered as constituting their essence.

These opinions, I imagine, contain a considerable portion of truth along with much error. That there are general things,—general attributes, to wit—which



*really exist*, and which enable us to distribute things into classes, and that they belong to every individual of the class, are facts which I cannot but regard as indubitable. They appear so evident, that if we are to admit the existence of any thing out of the mind, it is difficult to see on what ground they are to be denied. To represent *all* our general ideas, however, as having things *really existing* for their objects, is certainly erroneous, for numbers of them have no object at all. To represent these objects as *general natures*, or *essences*, is, if possible, still more erroneous; for the general attributes of things are in no respect more essential to them than the properties which characterize them as individuals. The doctrine of general *essences*, as that doctrine is usually understood, is one of the most extraordinary deviations from the sobriety of philosophy that can easily be imagined. The truth evidently is, that the *Realists*, commencing their inquiries with the general attributes of objects *actually existing*,—and it was both proper and natural that they should do so,—were gradually led to extend their belief of general and actual existences far beyond due bounds, and to exalt them to an importance to which they were in no respect entitled. Such a result is so consonant to the usual bent of the human mind, that, in the infancy of philosophy, it could hardly be avoided.

The *Conceptualists* maintain, that our general ideas are formed by *abstraction*; that they are necessary to our distributing things into classes; that they are styled general, not on account of their own nature but on account of their objects; and that though they

have all objects to which they refer, yet the objects of many of them are things which have *no real existence*. These opinions too, I imagine, contain a considerable portion of truth along with much error. That we have ideas of general attributes, and of things possessed of general attributes, must be allowed by every one; and to refuse them the title of general ideas, is not to attack any tenet of philosophy true or false, but merely to quarrel with a very common and very convenient mode of expression. That such ideas are necessary to our arranging things into classes, must also be allowed; for whatever common attributes things may possess, they can be of no use to our classifications unless we obtain ideas of them. So far, I imagine, the doctrine of the *Conceptualists* is perfectly accurate. But the notion that *all* our general ideas have objects to which they refer, is clearly untenable, for numbers of them have no objects whatever. To say that they have objects, but that the objects do *not exist*, is a direct contradiction. A thing which does not exist cannot be the object of any thing, for it is *nothing at all*. But by far the greatest error of the *Conceptualists*, is their ascribing the formation of general ideas to *abstraction*. The following passage from Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, contains a very distinct summary of their opinions on this point:

"Let any one," says Locke, "reflect, and then tell me wherein does the idea of *man* differ from that of *Peter* and *Paul*, or his idea of a horse from that of *Bucephalus*, but in his *leaving out* something that



is peculiar to each individual, and *retaining* so much of those particular complex ideas of several particular circumstances as they are found to agree in? Of the complex ideas signified by the names *man* and *horse*, *leaving out* but those particulars wherein they differ, and *retaining* only those wherein they agree, and of these making a new distinct complex idea, and giving the name animal to it, one has a more general term, that comprehends with man several other creatures. *Leave out* the idea of animal, sense, and spontaneous motion, and the remaining complex idea, made up of the remaining simple ones, of body, life, and nourishment, becomes a more general one, under the more comprehensive term *vivens*. And, not to dwell longer on this particular, so evident in itself, by the same way the mind proceeds to *body*, *substance*, and at last to *being*, *thing*, and such universal terms, which stand for any of our ideas whatsoever."

Now this whole doctrine of *leaving out particular ideas* in order to form general ones, appears to me completely without foundation. In no case whatsoever do we form an idea of an animal,—to take one of Locke's own instances,—by conceiving *merely* those attributes which characterise it as an animal. Along with such general attributes, we uniformly conceive a variety of others,—such as the *size* of the animal, its *colour*, its *figure*, and so on. In short, the *Conceptualists*, like the *Realists* before them, have, in many respects, shown a strong propensity to push their tenets considerably farther than truth authorises.

The *Nominalists* maintain, that there is nothing



general but *words* or *signs*, that by words *alone* we conduct all our general inquiries, and that general ideas are merely conceptions of any of the individual objects to which the words refer. These opinions I cannot but regard as containing much less truth than those of either the *Realists* or *Conceptualists*. That we are capable of using general words, is evident; that words aid us in conducting our inquiries, is no less evident; and it must also be allowed, that words are apt to suggest conceptions of some of the individual objects to which they refer. But farther than these admissions, we cannot, I imagine, go with propriety. To maintain that words are the *only things* that are general, and that there are neither general ideas nor general attributes, is to do nothing, as I have already remarked, but quarrel with a common and convenient mode of speaking. To maintain, that by words *alone* we conduct our general investigations, is also inadmissible; for although, in carrying on a process of reasoning, *some* words may be employed without annexing to them ideas of their import, yet in the case of others, such ideas are indispensable. The opinion that the ideas denoted by general words are merely ideas of any of the individual objects to which the words refer, is no less inadmissible. When we hear, for example, the word *man*, there may be suggested to us an idea of a person six feet high, of fair complexion, and of great bodily strength; but surely our idea of the import of the word *man* is not the idea of a person six feet high, of fair complexion, and of great bodily strength. Our idea of the import of this word

is merely an idea of an object possessed of the properties which *characterise* a man, and of course an idea of what belongs to all men. Such an idea, it is true, never exists but in *connexion with many others*; but that is of no manner of consequence. The idea of the import of a word is not to be confounded with the accessory ideas that may happen to be *combined* with it. Besides, in not a few cases, the opinion that our ideas of the import of general words are merely ideas of any of the individual objects to which the word refers, has not even the semblance of truth. What, for example, are our ideas of the import of such words as *all*, *each*, *every*, and so on: or of the phrases *all mankind*, the *generality of mankind*, *every man*, and so on? These words and phrases have all a meaning, and the merest child can form an idea of their meaning, but is this idea nothing but that of an individual object? Is our idea of the meaning of the phrase *all mankind* merely an idea of an individual man? No person surely will risk such an assertion.

In short, the three sects of Realists, Conceptualists, and Nominalists, appear evidently to have divided the truth among them, while each, misled by certain aspects of the subject, and zeal for the honour of its respective tenets, has given way to notions that are in the highest degree extravagant.

### *Imagination.*

I may here remark, that *association* and *attention* include between them what is usually called the power of *imagination*. The exercise of this power consists



in forming new combinations among our ideas ; and it is quite manifest, from what has been already stated, that association and attention together must be adequate to such an office.

#### SECT. V.

##### *Freedom of the Mind in the exercise of the Voluntary Principle.*

###### I.—*Explanation of Words.*

IN speculations concerning *the freedom of the will*, the words *power, influence, can, able, necessary, must*, and others of a similar character, are frequently made use of ; and though I shall endeavour to employ them in their common acceptation, yet it may not be improper to point out what I conceive that acceptation really to be. This may be done in a few sentences.

The word *power*, in common language, seems evidently to denote a species of *consistency*—the consistency of the *being* of things, with their *performing some kind of action*. When we say that a horse has *power* to draw a ton weight, we obviously mean, that it is *consistent* with the being of a horse to draw a ton weight—*consistent* with his being, to wit, according to the present constitution of nature. When we say that an eagle has *power* to fly through the air, we mean, that it is *consistent* with the being of an eagle to fly through the air—*consistent* with its being, according to the present constitution of nature. When we say that man has *power* to lift his hand to



his head, that he has *power* to walk on the ground, that he has power to utter articulate sounds, that he has power to manufacture clothes, that he has power to build houses, &c. the very same is our meaning—that it is *consistent* with the being of man to do all these things—*consistent* with his being, according to the present constitution of nature: And so in every other case. The *consistency* of the being of things with their performing actions, is really all that is meant in common language by the term *power*.\*

The import of the words *influence, can, able, possible, &c.* is either the same with that of the word *power*, or a mere modification of it, and does not, therefore, require any separate illustration.

The word *impossible* means the *inconsistency* of the being of things with their performing actions. When we say that it is *impossible* for man to live under water, that it is *impossible* for an eagle to fly to the moon, that it is *impossible* for a horse to speak Latin, we mean that it is *inconsistent* with the being of these objects to do such things—*inconsistent* with their being, according to the present constitution of nature.

The import of the words *unable, cannot, insufficient, &c.* is either the same with that of *impossible*, or a mere modification of it.

The word *necessary* means the *inconsistency* of the being of things with their *not* performing some kind of action. When we say that if fire be applied to wood,

\* See Note F.

it will *necessarily* make it burn; that if it be applied to gunpowder, it will *necessarily* make it explode; and that if it be applied to water, it will *necessarily* make it boil; we mean that it is *inconsistent* with the being of fire *not* to do these things—*inconsistent* with its being, according to the present constitution of nature.

The import of the words *must*, *infallible*, *inevitable*, &c. is either the same with the word *necessary*, or a mere modification of it.

In their ordinary acceptation, none of these words refer to what are called *moral* connexions. We often, indeed, speak of *moral power*, *moral impossibility*, *moral necessity*, &c.; but the meaning of the words *power*, *impossibility*, and *necessity*, in such cases, is essentially different from their proper and more frequent meaning, and should not be confounded with it.

The word *liberty* means the *consistency* of the being of things, both with their performing and their not performing some kind of action. When we say that man has *liberty* to choose either to walk or to sit still, we mean that his choosing to walk is *consistent* with his being, and that his choosing to sit still is also *consistent* with his being—*consistent* with his being, according to the present constitution of nature.

The import of the words *freedom*, *may*, &c. is either the same with that of the word *liberty*, or a mere modification of it.

I am far, however, from intending to assert that



the foregoing terms have *always* the signification now mentioned, for, like other terms of frequent occurrence, they undoubtedly vary in their signification; but the import I have mentioned seems evidently to be the fundamental one, and that from which all the others are derived.\*

President Edwards, in his valuable Treatise on *Free Will*, says, that "the word *necessary*, as used in common speech, is a relative term, and relates to some supposed opposition made to the existence of the thing

\* On not a few occasions the words *power*, *impossible*, *necessary*, &c. appear to refer to *consistencies* and *inconsistencies*, without any regard to action at all. When we say that the three angles of a triangle are *necessarily* equal to two right angles, or that this proposition is a *necessary* truth, we mean that it would involve an *inconsistency* or *contradiction*, to suppose the three angles of a triangle not to be equal to two right angles. Here there seems to be no reference to action. Neither does there seem to be any reference to action, when we say that it is impossible for the same thing *to be* and *not to be*. What we mean by this proposition, is, that it would involve an *inconsistency* or *contradiction*, to suppose the same thing *to be* and *not to be*.

Perhaps, however, in both these cases there is a secret reference to action implied. When we say that the three angles of a triangle are necessarily equal to two right angles, we may mean that it is inconsistent with our being to *believe* the three angles of a triangle not to be equal to two right angles: Or, that it would be inconsistent with every kind of being to *make* the three angles of a triangle not equal to two right angles. And when we say that it is impossible for the same thing *to be* and *not to be*, the same may be our meaning—that it is inconsistent with our being to *believe* the same thing *to be* and *not to be*: Or, that it would be inconsistent with every kind of being to *make* the same thing *to be* and *not to be*.



spoken of, which is overcome, or proves in vain to hinder or alter it. That is necessary, in the original and proper sense of the word, which is, or will be, notwithstanding all supposable opposition. To say that a thing is necessary, is the same thing as to say, that it is impossible it should not be : But the word *impossible* is manifestly a relative term, and has reference to supposed power exerted to bring a thing to pass which is insufficient for the effect ; as the word *unable* is a relative term, and has always relation to ability or endeavour, which is insufficient ; and as the word *irresistible* is relative, and has always reference to resistance which is made, or may be made, to some force or power tending to an effect, and is insufficient to withstand the power or hinder the effect. The common notion of *necessity* and *impossibility* implies something that frustrates endeavour or desire."

But this seems to be a mistaken view of the meaning of these terms, whatever may have been their original meaning. We can say, for instance, with perfect propriety, that it is so completely impossible for a person to do such a thing, that he cannot even *attempt*, or *desire*, to do it ; and yet here, from the very nature of the case, all *endeavour* and *desire* are excluded.

Edwards remarks in a subsequent passage, that, " men, in their first use of such phrases as these, *must*, *cannot*, *cannot help it*, *cannot avoid it*, *necessary*, *unable*, *impossible*, *unavoidable*, *irresistible*, &c., use them to signify necessity of constraint or restraint, a natural necessity or impossibility ; or some necessity

that the will has nothing to do in ; which may be whether a man will or no ; and which may be supposed to be just the same, let man's inclinations and desires be what they will. Such kind of terms in their original use, I suppose, among all nations are relative, carrying in their signification (as was before observed) a reference or respect to some contrary will or desire, or endeavour, which, it is supposed, is, or may be, in the case. All men find, and begin to find in early childhood, that there are innumerable things that cannot be done, which they desire to do ; and innumerable things which they are averse to, that must be, they cannot avoid them, they will be whether they choose them or no. It is to express this necessity, which men so soon and so often find, and which so greatly and early affects them in innumerable cases, that such terms and phrases are first formed ; and it is to signify such a necessity, that they are *first* used, and that they are *most constantly used*, in the common affairs of life ; and not to signify any such metaphysical, speculative, and abstract notion, as that connexion in the nature or course of things, which is between the subject and predicate of a proposition, and which is the foundation of the certain truth of that proposition ; to signify which, they who employ themselves in philosophical inquiries into the first origin and metaphysical relations and dependencies of things, have borrowed these terms for want of others. But we grow up from our cradle in the use of such terms and phrases entirely different from this, and carrying a sense exceedingly diverse from that,



in which they are commonly used in the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists."

The first thing that must strike every one on reading these remarks, is the egregious impropriety of using words in a sense entirely different from that to which mankind are habituated. Such a use of them can serve no other purpose than to produce perplexity, and give to disquisitions an air of profoundness and originality, which, if translated into ordinary language, would appear to be very commonplace and superficial.

It will readily be admitted, that there are cases in which it is requisite to deviate from the literal and more frequent acceptation of the terms above-mentioned,—even common use authorises such deviations,—but the remedy is obvious. When such cases occur, let them be carefully marked, and the deviations be carried no farther than the circumstances demand. According to the present nomenclature of philosophers on the subject of volition, it is much more difficult to understand the import of the terms they make use of, than to understand the subject itself which they are labouring to explain. I need hardly remark, that in the following observations I adhere as closely as possible to the common use of the expressions, and that when I employ the words *power*, *influence*, *can*, *able*, &c., I do not refer to what has been called *moral* power, or *moral* influence, (except when I give express notice) but to what is called *natural* power, and *natural* influence.\*

\* It is frequently requisite in philosophical disquisitions, to



## II.—*Explanation of the Subject.*

Do cases ever occur in which different results take place, without any difference in the previous circumstances which *influence*\* them? This question is of some importance to philosophy in general, and the celebrated controversy respecting *Free Will* entirely depends on it. It can evidently be answered in no other way than by appealing to experience.

Some time ago I heard two different sounds, and discovered by experience that the previous event which occasioned the one was the motion of a coach, and the previous event which occasioned the other, the explosion of gunpowder. But it was only by experience I made these discoveries. Before all experience, the one sound, for any thing I could know, might have been occasioned by the very same circumstances as those which occasioned the other. The sounds themselves, indeed, were different, but I surely could not infer that certain other things which were *prior* to

make use of such expressions as *physical* power, *voluntary* power, *natural* power, and *moral* power. *Physical* power is that power, which, in so far as human agency is concerned, operates *spontaneously* or *necessarily*—as the power of the moon to produce tides in the ocean, the power of impressions on our organs of sense to produce sensations, and the power of ideas to suggest one another in consequence of association. *Voluntary* power is the power of volition. *Natural* power is a general expression, denoting both physical and voluntary power: And *moral* power (as I shall afterwards endeavour to show) is not, properly speaking, power at all.

\* Let it be remembered, that I use the word *influence* to denote *natural influence*, in contradistinction to what is called *moral influence*.

them, and *totally distinct from them*, were also different. It is true, that *after* I have learned the difference of previous circumstances, I may be led by analogy, when I hear similar sounds, to conclude that they also are preceded by different circumstances; but this analogy supposes experience, and is entirely founded on it.

With regard to the operations of material things, there is every reason to believe that *no difference* ever takes place in the results, without some difference in the previous circumstances from which they proceed, and the same remark applies to many of the operations of mind. In every instance of *sensation* and *association*, experience, or the strongest analogies founded on experience, decisively prove that, whenever a difference is found in the results, the previous circumstances on which they depend are also in some respect different. In the case of attention or volition, however, the remark, I imagine, does not apply, for very different exercises of this faculty seem capable of taking place, while all the previous influencing circumstances are exactly alike.

1. There is at present in my mind ideas of three different objects, A, B, and C; I first attend to A, then to B, then to C, and lastly I cease to attend to any of them; and yet, so far as experience enables me to judge, the influencing circumstances which precede these exercises of attention, and its non-exercise, are precisely the same. My experience, I allow, is not very distinct, and that after the most careful observation, I may have committed some mistake; but what



I have now stated is certainly the result of my experience so far as it goes.

2. I am convinced, that at any time which may be specified—the end of next minute for example—if the idea of three objects shall be present to my mind, I shall be able to attend to any of them or to none of them. At the end of next minute, however, my mind can only be in *one state*, for it cannot be in different states at the same instant. I am convinced then, that, while all the previous influencing circumstances are exactly the same, there may take place any one of a number of events which are entirely different. Whence does this conviction arise? If from some original principle, it is probably well founded, for all the dictates of our original principles, when not opposed by stronger evidence, must be considered as well founded. There is no reason, however, to imagine that it arises from any such principle, but from former experience.—I have formerly observed that attention has been exercised about different objects, or not exercised about any of them, while all the previous influencing circumstances were the same, and I naturally believe, therefore, that it may be so again.

3. If on any occasion we choose what we know to be *wrong*, we afterwards feel a disposition to blame ourselves, and in doing so we are always convinced, and firmly convinced, that, in the circumstances in which we were placed, it was possible for a different choice to have been made. No man blames himself for doing what he could not *possibly avoid*. We are firmly convinced, then, that while the mind was in



one and the same state—for it could not be in different states at the same instant—a different choice might have taken place from what actually did take place. How could we come by this conviction except from experience? Or, if it be said, by some original principle of our nature, this alters not the case in the slightest degree, for, as already remarked, the dictates of our original principles, when not opposed by stronger evidence, must all be considered as well founded. In reality, such dictates form the very foundation of experience.

It is unnecessary, I imagine, to adduce other instances. Those now given seem clearly to show that experience, *so far as it goes*, is decidedly in favour of the doctrine—that very considerable differences may take place in the exercise of attention, while all the previous influencing circumstances are exactly alike.

And why should we not acquiesce in this doctrine? It is experience alone that can determine the question, for it is absurd to suppose that it may be determined by reasoning *a priori*; and though our experience is not perhaps as distinct as might be wished, it is quite sufficient to control our belief, if stronger evidence cannot be adduced to the contrary. The only contrary evidence is such as the following.

1. We cannot conceive, it may be said, that a difference should take place in any class of results, without some difference in the previous circumstances which influence them. But this objection can be urged only by those who have never thought on the

subject, for there is manifestly no difficulty whatsoever in forming such a conception. I can just now conceive the sensation of *heat* to be preceded by the presence of *fire*, and immediately after I can conceive the sensation of *cold* to be preceded by the presence of *fire*. In fact, were it not for experience, I could not know but that the sensation of cold is actually preceded by the presence of fire. In like manner, I can conceive a choice or act of attention to be preceded by a certain state of mind, and immediately after I can conceive a different choice, or no choice at all, to be preceded by the same state of mind. Any of these things I can conceive just as easily as any other, and it is only by experience I can discover how things really are. It is altogether unwarrantable, therefore, to allege that we cannot *conceive* a difference in any phenomena, without some difference in the influencing circumstances which precede them; for it is just as easy to conceive them to be different, as to conceive them to be alike.

We cannot, it is true, conceive *how* results should be different, while all the influencing circumstances which precede them are the same, but neither can we conceive *how* they should be different, while all the preceding influencing circumstances are different. We cannot conceive *how* the sensation of heat should be preceded by the presence of fire, nor the sensation of cold by the presence of ice, but we can easily enough conceive the facts themselves. In like manner we cannot conceive *how* different exercises of attention, and its non-exercise, should be preceded by the same



influencing circumstances, but we can easily enough conceive that they are so preceded.

2. It is contrary, it may be said, to all the analogies of matter, and to many of those of mind, that different acts of choice should take place, while the influencing circumstances that precede them are the same. There cannot be a doubt that it is contrary to such analogies; but analogy, it is well known, is often entitled to very limited credit, and, in the present case, the analogies are so remote as hardly to be entitled to any credit at all. With regard to the analogies of matter, they are allowed by every one to form a most unsafe guide to direct our investigations concerning volition, and the analogies of sensation and association are almost equally unsafe. Sensation and association are so exceedingly different from volition, that no person, so far as I know, regards them as similar, and to argue, therefore, to the latter from the analogies of the former, is to subject ourselves to the certain risk of error. Before all experience, no man can assign a reason why a particular class of phenomena should be preceded by a particular class of influencing circumstances, nor why different classes of phenomena should not be preceded by the same influencing circumstances. In the case of volition, experience, so far as we can judge, declares that different phenomena are in reality preceded by the same influencing circumstances, and no argument derived from weak analogies can be deemed sufficient to subvert this experience.

3. Though it be allowed, it may be said, that a difference may take place in the acts of volition, while



no difference takes place in the previous circumstances which influence them, yet the origin of morals will not be accounted for. This objection is as easily removed as the former. Though the above doctrine *alone* is certainly insufficient to account for the origin of morals, yet it undoubtedly assists us in accounting for them, nor can they be accounted for without it. If every different choice *must* be the result of something different in the previous state of the mind, the whole theory and practice of morals are overturned from their foundations, and vice, and virtue, and sin, and duty, are mere empty names.

But admitting the objection in its full extent, to what does it amount? Merely to this, that the above doctrine will not account for something else which is confessedly different from it. But is it therefore erroneous? Were the doctrine brought forward as an hypothesis for solving the question of moral obligation, it would certainly be a sufficient refutation to show that it does not solve it. But when it is brought forward for no such purpose, but rests on its own evidence, the objection is altogether nugatory.

4. The last objection I shall notice is, that the acts of volition must take place *at random* if they be different, without any difference in the previous influencing circumstances. But this is not a just consequence. One thing may give pleasure, while another gives pain; and it surely does not follow, that, if we can choose either, we shall as readily choose the latter as the former. The choice of one thing, too, may lead to pleasurable consequences, while the other leads to painful; and neither, in this case, does it follow, that

if we can choose either, we shall as readily choose the latter as the former. In short, the above doctrine does not deny the utility of motives; it only denies that they are *physical causes*, and *physically connected* with the volitions that follow them.

We have all the evidence, therefore, that the nature of the case admits, that attention or volition may be employed about any one of the different ideas in our minds, or may cease to be employed altogether, though the previous influencing circumstances be precisely alike. This, I imagine, is the great leading feature which distinguishes attention or volition from all other principles. The operations of matter, and likewise those of sensation and association, are of such a nature, that every difference in the results implies some difference in the previous circumstances by which they are influenced; but volition is so entirely *sui generis*, that it may either be employed or not employed; and when employed, may be directed to any one of the various ideas that happen to be present to us, though the previous influencing circumstances be exactly the same.

If this doctrine be admitted, the question of *Free Will* must be considered as decided. An act of the will is said to be *free*, when at one and the same time *it is possible for it either to take place, or not to take place*. Now the above doctrine establishes a far more extensive freedom than this, for it not only maintains that at one and the same time a particular act of volition may take place, or may not take place, but that this may be true of a great number of them. A variety of ideas are always present to the mind at the



same instant; and about any one of them, according to the above doctrine, *our will* may be exerted, or it may cease to be exerted altogether. The *freedom of will*, therefore, for which I plead, is of a much more extensive kind than that which is usually contended for.

But perhaps it may now be asked, What *are* the previous circumstances which influence an act of volition? An act of volition is an effect. Every effect has a cause, and what is the cause of *this* effect? The answer is almost self-evident. An act of volition, as I have again and again remarked, is an act of *the mind itself*; and the mind, of course, is the previous circumstance which influences it; in other words, is its cause,—a cause of such a nature, as to be *able* in the same state to produce any one of a number of different acts.

The doctrine of *Free Will* is perfectly congenial to the unbiassed dictates of the human breast, and could not fail to be universally embraced, were it not for certain metaphysical difficulties with which it is supposed to be attended. So completely, indeed, is it interwoven with the whole frame of our minds, that except on some singular occasions, it is in reality universally embraced. Like the existence of matter, we may doubt or disbelieve it in our hours of speculation, but no sooner do we go out to the world and engage in any active employment, than the belief of it governs our thoughts and our actions without intermission.

There appears every where, however, the greatest reluctance to admit the principle on which *Free Will* is founded. That a difference may take place in the



exercise of volition without any difference in the previous influencing circumstances, is a tenet which no one seems inclined to acknowledge. I do not indeed know that it has ever been explicitly rejected, for I do not know that it has ever been fairly examined; but a strong disposition seems every where to prevail to treat it as erroneous. Dr Reid, for example, one of the most strenuous defenders of freedom, says, that by the liberty of a moral agent, he understands *a power* over the determinations of the will. By the determinations of the *will*, he evidently means our volitions, and they are subject, he says, to a *power* that is *over them*. To this power he gives no name, but its exercise must certainly precede our volitions, else it could not control them. But why suppose that volition depends on the previous exercise of any other power? The same reason would require that that power should depend on some other power, and so on to infinity. Had Dr Reid not been swayed by the bias I have referred to, he never could have given so unsatisfactory a statement.

The origin of this bias is obviously to be imputed to the influence of analogy. We always find, in the case of the operations of matter, and likewise of those of sensation and association,—operations the most palpably exposed to our observation,—that a difference never takes place in the results without some difference in the previous circumstances which influence them. A strong tendency is thus generated to think that a difference in results must always imply a difference in the influencing circumstances. We bring this tendency along with us to the examination of vo-

lition, and, when we think of different volitions, are not only led by it to imagine something different in the previous state of the mind which produces them, but are prevented from clearly and steadily conceiving how the case can be otherwise.

It is this difficulty, I imagine, of clearly and steadily conceiving the *exact nature* of free will, that has given rise to the principal objections to it. If once mankind precisely knew what free will is, there are few, I imagine, but would acknowledge its existence.

The power of volition or attention, is often productive of effects exceedingly analogous to those produced by other principles, and is thus very apt to be confounded with them. When we *attend*, for example, to any of our ideas, it always becomes more *vivid* and *distinct*; and hence we are apt to imagine, that in every case when our ideas become vivid and distinct, they are objects of attention. This, however, is plainly a mistake, for other causes besides attention may produce such effects. A strong impression on any of our sensitive organs may be accompanied with an idea both vivid and distinct, not only without attention, but in spite of our attending to something else. And the same may happen, though not so frequently, in consequence of association.

We sometimes speak, too, as if attention could be *forcibly* attracted to things. Severe pain is generally supposed to have this influence, for we hardly think it possible to avoid attending to what is very painful. Here, too, I imagine, we are mistaken. The acts of attention must be *free*, else they are not acts of *our own*, and, of course, no acts of attention at all. The



effect of severe pain seems to be the very reverse of what is usually supposed. Instead of attending to pain, when felt in great severity, we are rather inclined, I conceive, to turn our attention as far away from it as possible. The efforts we are then conscious of making are not efforts of attention to *the pain*, but efforts directed to something else to prevent the pain from overpowering us.

The speaking of attention as *improvable by exercise*, seems also inaccurate; at least the facts which are usually mentioned, do not evince such improvement. It is no doubt true, that the longer we attend to any thing, the less difficulty we find in attending to it; but this is plainly not owing to any improvement in the faculty of attention, but to the influence of association. Association, as formerly shown, necessarily has the effect of presenting to us things the more steadily the more frequently we have formerly attended to them, and, of course, must facilitate any future attention to them.

The speaking of acquiring *habits* of attention, if our language be literally understood, is also, I imagine, inaccurate. A habit is something which has a tendency to operate without our interference. Of course, it is not an act of *our own*, and therefore no act of attention at all. If by *habits of attention*, indeed, no more be meant than that, by frequently employing this faculty, we see additional reasons for employing it, and are thus the more frequently *induced* to employ it, there is no truth which appears to me more evident; but the word *habit*, I apprehend, is rather improperly used in such a case.



## SECT. VI.

*Volition includes Causation.*

WHEN we inquire into the nature of *causation*, we merely inquire into the meaning of the word *cause* or *causation*, as used in common language. If we give the term any *new* meaning of our own, there is no occasion for any inquiry at all. We have merely to state the new meaning we propose, and settle the matter at once. In reality, if we do not abide by the common use of the term, our inquiries must always appear uncandid and deceptive. When we ask, for example, in what way mankind are led to believe that every change has a cause, we propose a question of some importance in philosophy, and one that has frequently exercised the ingenuity of the inquisitive; but if we shift the meaning of the term, we proportionally shift the subject of investigation, and under the appearance of examining one question, examine another materially different.\*

Our common notions respecting causation are ex-

\* The most profound investigations of metaphysical study, it should be remembered, frequently lead to nothing but an exposition of sentiments which have been current among mankind in all ages. On this account, some have been disposed to regard the science of metaphysics as exceedingly useless. It amounts to nothing, they allege, but a statement of things which every person knew before. This, however, is not a fair objection. A clear and systematised explanation of the common sentiments of mankind—including, of course, an explanation of the principles which regulate them—would be an acquisition of the very highest value.

ceedingly simple, and, if allowance be made for preliminary conditions, appear to be comprised in the following proposition,—*A cause is something followed by some other thing, by which it would have been followed though nothing else had been.*

In every instance of causation, in the common acceptance of the term, we must plainly allow for things preliminary. When we say that a storm at sea was the cause of a certain shipwreck, it is plain that the ship itself, the materials of which it was constructed, the sea on which it was sailing, and many other particulars, were things without the previous existence of which the storm would not have caused the wreck. When we say that the dampness of the apartment was the cause of injuring a certain portrait, it is no less plain that the portrait itself, the artist who painted it, the colours with which it was painted, and many other particulars, were things without the previous existence of which the dampness of the apartment would not have caused the injury. Even when we say that the Almighty was the cause or creator of the world, there are things which must be regarded as preliminary,—certain views, to wit, or intentions in the divine mind.

After making allowance, however, for such preliminaries, a cause, I imagine, is merely, as already defined,—something followed by some other thing, by which it would have been followed though nothing else had been. And an effect, of course, is something which follows some other thing, and which it would have followed though nothing else had been.

The smallest reflection seems sufficient to establish



the correctness of this account of causation. When we say that a storm at sea was the cause of a certain shipwreck, it seems manifest that our meaning is, that, if allowance be made for preliminary conditions, the shipwreck would have happened though there had been nothing but the storm. When we say, that the dampness of the apartment was the cause of injuring a certain portrait, it seems also manifest that our meaning is, that, if allowance be made for preliminary conditions, the portrait would have been injured though there had been nothing but the dampness of the apartment. When we say, that a stroke from a horse was the cause of a person's death, it seems likewise manifest that our meaning is, that, if allowance be made for preliminary conditions, the death of the person would have happened though there had been nothing but the stroke from the horse. When we say that the misconduct of an individual has been the cause of much evil, it still seems manifest that our meaning is, that, if allowance be made for preliminary conditions, the evil would have happened though there had been nothing but the misconduct of the individual: And so in all other cases.\*

Things, it is true, are often styled the causes of effects, which are separated from them by *intervening media*; but such things are not their causes, properly so called. They are only the causes which *lead to* them, and, to distinguish them from real causes, they are usually styled *remote* causes.

Dr Brown, in his *Inquiry*, remarks, that every de-

\* See Note E.



fnition of causation must be erroneous, " that excludes the possible agency of coexisting objects, which, separately, might have been sufficient to produce the particular phenomenon, that is referred to any one of them. A hand, for example, may hold a piece of iron, and may approach a loadstone with it, in exactly the same direction, and with exactly the same velocity, as that with which the iron, if free, would itself have approached it. In this case, it is evident, that, whether we regard the motion of the iron as produced by the hand, or by the loadstone, *the first object might not have been, and yet the second might have existed.*"

The definition I have proposed, however, completely meets such a case ; though, in reality, it would be of little consequence whether it met it or not, for there is no reason to believe that the case ever happens. It is certainly true that a hand may hold a piece of iron, and approach a loadstone with it, in exactly the same direction, and with exactly the same velocity, as that with which the iron, if free, would have approached it ; but in these circumstances, the loadstone is either not the cause of the velocity at all, or, if both the loadstone and the hand be its cause, the iron is acted on by two causes, and consequently, though the *velocity* be the same, its *power*—its power to overcome resistance, for example—is doubled. And in every case, without a single exception, if a body be acted on by *two* or *more* forces, though the *velocity* be the same as if there were only one of them, yet the *power* of the velocity will be in proportion to the amount of the conjoint forces. The effect, therefore, though *apparently* the same, is really different. It possesses

attributes which one of the forces could not have given it.

If the definition I have proposed be received, it is almost self-evident that the exercise of volition includes causation ; for, beyond all question, whenever this exercise takes place, it is followed by something by which, (after allowing for preliminary conditions,) it would have been followed though nothing else had been. Every person indeed admits, even the advocates of necessity, that the exercise of volition includes causation.

It includes causation, too, of the highest kind. We certainly reckon matter to be a species of cause. A wound by a sword, we say, is the cause of pain ; an impulse from one body, we also say, is the cause of motion in other bodies ; and so in a thousand other instances. Indeed the whole structure of common language shows that matter is reckoned a cause of things.

But it is by no means reckoned a cause of equal rank with mind. In every condition in which matter is placed, it acts *necessarily*. A wound by a sword *cannot avoid* giving pain, and an impulse from one body *cannot avoid* giving motion to other bodies. Matter, in short, in the circumstances in which it is placed, has but one line of acting, from which it cannot possibly deviate.

The case is totally different with mind, in the exercise of volition. It is unrestrained either by exterior or interior influence, and instead of being confined to one line of acting, it may resort to any one of an indefinite number, or decline acting altogether.

The effects, too, of which matter is the cause, are



so situated, that every one of them is *inseparably connected* with some prior one, that with some prior one, and so on. And hence it is impossible to trace any thing up to matter as its *source*. In other words, matter has the power of *continuing* changes, but has no power of *beginning* changes.

The effects of which mind, in the exercise of volition, is the cause, are very differently situated. The very essence of an exercise of volition consists in being *free*—in not being *inseparably connected* with any thing prior. It is something which, in the circumstances of the case, might have happened, or might not have happened; and it is quite possible, therefore, to trace things to volition as their *source*. In other words, mind, in the exercise of volition, is not only capable of *continuing* changes, but of *beginning* changes. It can give rise to *new events*, and *new series* of events, and to as many of them as do not surpass the extent of its freedom.

Matter, too, being a necessary agent, must submit to whatever *force* is applied to it. It must always act as it is acted upon, and may be *compelled* by mind to do any thing of which its attributes are capable.

But mind cannot be thus controlled by matter. In the exercise of volition, being free, it cannot be *forced* at all. It may act according to circumstances presented to it, but it acts from *itself*, and as *itself* sees meet. It may *compel* matter to do many things, but matter can *compel* it to do nothing. *Compulsion* is totally inapplicable to it. It *acts*, but it is never *acted upon*.

I may add, that the mind is an *intelligent agent*,



and in the exercise of volition, its intelligence is always more or less employed. When we choose things, we have uniformly at the time some *acquaintance* with them, and frequently also an *acquaintance* with a variety of their relations.

So completely superior, indeed, as a cause, is mind reckoned to matter, that when they act in conjunction, we are apt to ascribe causation almost exclusively to the former, and to regard the latter as hardly a cause at all. If a murder, for example, be committed by the discharge of a musket, the stroke of the bullet, its motion through the air, the explosion of the gunpowder, the drawing of the trigger, and the volition of a human being, are all concerned in producing the fatal result; but the human being alone we are apt to regard as the cause, and to look on the musket, the powder, the trigger, and the bullet, as circumstances quite inferior and subordinate. Nor would our sentiments be altered, though, instead of three or four intermediate circumstances, there were three or four thousand. Mind, in short, we regard as the *ruler*, and matter as the *subject*; mind as the *master*, and matter as the *servant*; mind as the *principal*, and matter as the *accessory*.

A distinction is made by philosophers between what they call *physical* and *efficient* causes. But a cause which is *not efficient* is really no cause at all. It is a cause which wants the power of causation, and of course a contradiction in terms. In common language, *causation* and *efficiency* are merely names for one and the same thing, viewed under different aspects.

A *physical cause*, as understood by philosophers, is nothing but a *constant antecedent*. It is not some-

thing which is followed by some other thing, and by which (if we except preliminary conditions) it would have been followed, though nothing else had been. This last circumstance, though the very essence of causation, in the common import of the term, is thrown aside by philosophers altogether, *and constancy of antecedence* exclusively fixed on.

Stewart, in his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, remarks, that "when it is said that every change in nature indicates the operation of a cause, the word *cause* expresses something which is supposed to be necessarily connected with the change; and without which it could not have happened. This may be called the *metaphysical* meaning of the word; and such causes may be called *metaphysical* or *efficient causes*. In natural philosophy, however, when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two are *constantly conjoined*; so that when we see the one, we may expect the other. These conjunctions we learn from experience alone; and without an acquaintance with them, we could not accommodate our conduct to the established course of nature. The causes which are the objects of our investigation in natural philosophy, may, for the sake of distinction, be styled *physical causes*."

"I am very ready to acknowledge," (Stewart adds,) "that this doctrine, concerning the object of natural philosophy, is not altogether agreeable to popular prejudices. When a man, unaccustomed to metaphysical speculations, is told, for the first time, that the science of physics gives no information concerning the efficient causes of the phenomena about which it is



employed, he feels some degree of surprise and mortification."

No wonder that when a man unaccustomed to metaphysical speculations is told, for the first time, that the science of physics gives no information concerning the efficient causes of the phenomena about which it is employed, he should feel some degree of surprise and mortification. He is accustomed to hear philosophers say that physical science explains the *causes* of things; that is, as he understands the expression, their *efficient* causes, for a cause not efficient, is, in the common use of the term, no cause at all: and it is quite natural that he should feel some surprise and mortification when told, for the first time, that philosophers have completely beguiled him, by putting a new meaning on an old term, and that they hardly even touch on a subject which he was led to believe it was their great object to expound.

Stewart goes on to remark, "that the natural bias of the mind, is surely to consider physical events as somehow linked together, and material substances as possessed of certain powers and virtues, which fit them to produce particular effects."

Beyond all controversy, the natural bias of the mind is as Stewart here states it. We *do* believe matter to possess certain *powers* and *virtues* which fit it to produce particular effects, and of course to be something very different from a mere *constant antecedent*.

"That we have no reason to believe this to be the case," Stewart adds, "has been shown in a very satisfactory manner by Hume, and by other writers; and



must, indeed, appear evident to every person on a moment's reflection."

These remarks I cannot but regard as very extraordinary, proceeding, as they do, from one who has no great fondness for paradoxes. The doctrine which Stewart would have us to receive, "as evident on a moment's reflection," is this—that matter, though accompanied with results, is merely their constant antecedent, and has no influence over them at all; that though we speak of the sun as affording light, yet the sun never affords any light; that though we speak of fire as affording heat, yet fire never affords any heat; that though we speak of food as affording nourishment, yet food never affords any nourishment; that though we speak of drink as affording refreshment, yet drink never affords any refreshment; that though we speak of houses as affording shelter, yet houses never afford any shelter, &c. &c.

If we ask who or what then is it that affords these comforts? Stewart will answer, That it is the Author of nature,—*the Author of nature, by his own direct and exclusive agency*; that the Author of nature affords light without using the influence or instrumentality of the sun; that the Author of nature affords heat without using the influence or instrumentality of fire; that the Author of nature affords nourishment without using the influence or instrumentality of food; that the Author of nature affords refreshment without using the influence or instrumentality of drink; that the Author of nature affords shelter without using the influence or instrumentality of houses. In short, that nothing material has any *power* or *influence*, or

*function of any kind, or of any degree; that the Author of nature does every thing himself that matter seems to do; and that when we speak of it as doing things, we are merely giving way to vulgar prejudices.*

I am quite aware that the friends of religion are in the practice of maintaining, that it is the Author of nature who has bestowed on matter all the powers it possesses; that it is he who preserves its powers in being, and that he employs them in accomplishing his purposes according to his pleasure. But this is an entirely different doctrine from that of Stewart. Stewart's doctrine is, that the Author of nature has bestowed on matter *no powers at all*; of course, that he *never preserves* its powers in being, *nor ever employs* them in accomplishing his purposes, as it has no powers to be preserved or to be employed. In short, that matter is merely the occasion or antecedent of the Author of nature's making use of his *own power*.

I have again and again stated this doctrine to persons unaccustomed to metaphysical speculations, and though both pious and intelligent, they uniformly regarded it as a mere philosophical reverie, somewhat akin to that of Malebranche about seeing things only in the divine mind.\*

\* It follows from Stewart's doctrine, that when mankind are supposed to be employing material implements for accomplishing the purposes they have in view, they are actually employing *God himself*. Thus, when a man employs a lever for raising a weight, he actually employs *God* to raise it, for the lever has no influence whatever; and when a man employs a steam engine to impel a



The *origin* of our idea of causation is plainly to be ascribed to our observing the successions of things. We perceive, for instance, an impulse from one body to be followed by motion in another, without perceiving any thing else (except preliminary conditions) that seems at all concerned in the matter; and as we have repeatedly perceived such events, we are led to *believe* that the impulse from the one body had been followed by motion in the other, though nothing else (if we except preliminary conditions) had been at all concerned in the matter. In other words, we believe the impulse from the one body to be the cause of the motion in the other. In like manner, we are conscious of an act of volition's being followed by the detention of an idea without being conscious of any thing else (excepting preliminary conditions) that seems at all concerned in the matter; and having been repeatedly conscious of such events, we are led to believe that the act of volition had been followed by the detention of the

vessel through the ocean, he actually employs *God* to impel it; for the engine has no influence whatever. Yea, more, when a man employs a pistol to murder another, he actually employs *God* to murder him, for the pistol has no influence whatever; and when a man employs arsenic to poison another, he actually employs *God* to poison him, for the arsenic has no influence whatever.

Many worthy men, I know, have embraced the doctrine of Stewart, from its appearance of piety under some of its aspects. I would beg, however, to caution them respecting its consequences, or at least to inform them, that they should speak out a little more distinctly, and let us see how their doctrine really looks. Their doctrine annihilates *second causes altogether*—if we except volitions, which are not usually styled second causes.



idea, though nothing else, except preliminary conditions, had been at all concerned in the matter. In other words, we are led to believe the act of volition to be the cause of the detention of the idea. To suppose there is any thing more mysterious in the case, is merely to create mysteries out of our own imaginations.

Philosophers, however, have given a very different account of the origin of our idea of causation. Stewart contends, that it arises from a distinct and original principle; that causation is primarily regarded as an attribute of mind, and that it is in consequence of association it is ever regarded as an attribute of matter. "In stating the argument for the existence of a Deity," says he, "several modern philosophers have been at pains to illustrate that law of our nature, which leads us to refer every change we perceive in the universe, to the operation of an efficient cause. This reference is not the result of reasoning, but necessarily accompanies the perception, so as to render it impossible for us to see the change, without feeling the conviction of the operation of some cause by which it was produced; much in the same manner in which we find it impossible to conceive a sensation, without being impressed with the belief of the existence of a sentient being. Hence, I apprehend, it is, that when we see two events constantly conjoined, we are led to associate the idea of causation, or efficiency, with the former, and to refer to it that power or energy by which the change was produced; in consequence of which association, we come to consider philosophy as the knowledge of efficient causes, and lose sight of the

operation of mind, in producing the phenomena of nature."

This notion, however, that our belief of causation is owing to a distinct and original principle of our constitution, though quite in accordance with the spirit of the school to which Stewart belongs, is not warranted by a single phenomenon; and with regard to our ascribing causation to the former of two connected events, we never do this unless we believe that the former would have been accompanied with the latter, though nothing else, except preliminary conditions, had been.

Dr Brown is of opinion, that our belief of causation is primarily occasioned by our observing the successions of material things. "It is impossible," says he, in his *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, "to attend to the common language of the Science of Mind, without perceiving its innumerable derivations from the analogies of power in the mutual agencies of material substances. The phenomena of mind succeed each other in a certain order, the phenomena of matter also have their peculiar order; but were we to judge, by the language of each, from which of the two sequences our notion of power is derived, the probability would seem on the side of the latter. It is only in poetry that wishes, and joys, and sorrows, are ascribed to inanimate objects; while, even in common conversation, we never speak of the faculties and passions of the soul, without a series of metaphors, borrowed from changes that take place in the objects around us. And, indeed, when we consider, not the language only, but the very abstractions, and imaginations, of which theories are made, we discover innumerable



attempts to materialise every operation of the mind, but very few attempts to spiritualise the operations of matter."—"It is only," says he, in another passage, "where great and unusual phenomena occur, and no visible cause is discerned, that the immediate agency of spirits is supposed. It is a *dignus vindice nodus*, and a God is therefore introduced; because mind, which is the only power that is altogether invisible, furnishes the only analogy to which recourse can be had. When sounds, therefore, are heard from the mountains, the grove, or the stream, while around the hearer no blast is stirring; when a voice of many thunders cries aloud, and fire flashes from the clouds, which, the very moment before, were one gloomy stillness, it is not wonderful that the heart and knee of man should fall prostrate, as in the presence of a mighty Spirit. But this belief is the natural result of an analogical reasoning, which, in a certain rude state of physical science, is irresistible, and differs not in the slightest degree, from a thousand other reasonings of analogy in physics, in which the cause supposed is not spiritual but material."

If the definition of causation which I ventured to propose be admitted, there is hardly room for any doubt respecting the origin of our idea of it,—the idea of *necessary* and *unintelligent causes* must be chiefly derived from our observing the operations of matter, and that of *free* and *intelligent* ones, from our observing the operations of volition. It may be asked, indeed, which of these operations is *first* observed by us; but such a question hardly merits an answer. It is precisely the same as asking whether we be first



conscious of volition and intelligence, or of the conception and belief of things outward.

The truth is, that would philosophers be satisfied with the common meaning of the word *cause*, they might easily solve, in a few sentences, a variety of questions, which, at present, costs them the labour of long dissertations. It is the optional meaning of their own that has chiefly involved the subject in difficulty.

When an object which is a cause is *actually accompanied* by an effect, it is said to *produce* the effect. The *production* of an effect is merely the effect *actually taking place*, and does not imply anything *intermediate* between it and its cause.

An effect's being *consistent* or *compatible* with the being of a particular cause, is styled the *power* of that cause. The *quantum* of effect which is consistent or compatible with its being, is styled the *degree* of its power; and when the effect is *actually taking place*, the power is said to be *exerted*, or to be *in operation*. The *operation* of a cause, or of the power of a cause, is nothing but some of its effects *actually taking place*. Before a particular effect, indeed, takes place, a variety of intermediate things may happen which imply the operation of power; but these intermediate things are in reality intermediate effects.

Things which are the causes of effects are said to be *active*, and things which are the recipients of effects are said to be *passive*. Things, therefore, which are the causes of effects which take place in themselves—such as human beings—are both *active* and *passive*.

It is of some importance to remember, that what is

styled the *power* of an object is merely a *relation*,—it is merely the *consistency* or *compatibility* of the *being* of the object with its *causing* some effect. In like manner the *susceptibility* of an object is merely a *relation*—it is merely the *consistency* or *compatibility* of the *being* of the object with its *receiving* some effect.\*

Hume and Brown have made a number of valuable observations on these and other particulars. Their leading doctrine of *invariable sequence* I cannot but regard as utterly untenable; but I am nevertheless persuaded, that they have done more to elucidate the relation of causation than all their predecessors put together.

Mankind are strongly impressed with the belief that *every change* proceeds from a cause. Whenever we witness a change or series of changes, we are uniformly convinced that they have been caused by something or other. It would strike us as eminently absurd to be told that a change may take place, and yet be caused by absolutely nothing. This belief seems evidently to arise from experience.

Every change, so far as our observation extends, is seen to proceed from something *prior* to it. Changes are not presented to us as detached or insulated things, but, without a single exception, as produced by objects that precede them. In other words, as arising from causes. Now, what is the impression on our minds which such a state of things is sure to produce? Beyond all question, so to connect the idea of

\* See notes F and G.



change with that of causation, as to make us believe the latter whenever we witness the former ; that is, to inspire us with the very belief whose origin we are examining,—that every change has a cause.

Perhaps it may be said that our experience is far from extending to the whole range of things, and that, for aught we can tell, beyond the limits of our experience, there may be changes which do not proceed from causes. But this remark does not in any degree bear on the question at issue. We are not at present inquiring whether the belief of mankind be true or false, but whence arises the belief itself. It certainly exists as a mental phenomenon ; and even though it should be a mere prejudice, still it must come from some quarter or other. From what quarter does it come ? This is the only question we are at present concerned with. And an experience that is *uniform, so far as it goes*, is perfectly capable of giving rise to such a belief. In fact, if the principle of association be well founded, such an experience *must* give rise to it.

Having stated what appears to me the true doctrine on the subject of causation, I shall now offer a few observations on the theory of Dr Brown, a writer who has paid an uncommon degree of attention to this branch of philosophy, but has given way, I apprehend, to notions which are very inadmissible. I have already adverted to some of the sentiments of this ingenious metaphysician in terms of approbation, but his leading doctrine—and which, indeed, is essentially the same with that of Hume—I cannot but regard as utterly without foundation.



Dr Brown defines a cause to be, "that which immediately precedes any change, and which, existing at any time in similar circumstances, has been always, and will be always, immediately followed by a similar change." Hume has proposed a similar definition; and on the doctrine which it involves, I would suggest the following observations.

1. When we inquire into the nature of causation, our inquiry, as already remarked, really resolves itself into an examination of the *meaning of the word cause or causation, as used in common language*. But the word cause, as commonly used, certainly does not include in its meaning *invariable sequence*—the very essence of Brown's definition. To inquire whether, like causes in like circumstances will always be followed by like effects, would appear to the common people a very reasonable inquiry; but if *invariable sequence* be included in the very meaning of causation, it would be evidently ridiculous, and the same with inquiring whether things will always be followed by those things by which they will always be followed. Nor do the common people deem it absurd to suppose that the laws of nature may be altered, and that things may produce very different effects from what they do at present. The fire, which is the cause of warmth to-day, may, without any *contradiction* they can discern, be the cause of chilliness to-morrow. But according to Brown's definition, were such a change to take place, causation never could be, nor ever could have been, concerned in the matter. The alteration would be completely destructive of that *invariable*-

*ness of sequence*, which, he alleges, is involved in the very import of the term.

2. Brown's definition confounds the meaning of a common word in language with a doctrine maintained only by a few speculative philosophers. The doctrine, that like antecedents are always followed by like consequents, though certainly entitled to an attentive examination, is a doctrine that is far from being universally received. Many eminent philosophers flatly deny it, and the great mass of mankind pay no heed to it at all. But whatever be its truth, it ought certainly not to be confounded with the import of a popular expression, nor mixed up with the terms of any definition. Such a mode of proceeding can occasion nothing but perplexity. Would any person define a triangle to be a figure which has three angles equal to two right angles, although a triangle is really such a figure?

3. The doctrine of Brown's definition takes *for granted*, that causation, as usually understood, should be altogether set aside, and something entirely different substituted in its place under the *same name*. A cause, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, as already remarked, is something which admits of objects that *begin* changes, but, according to Dr Brown, it is merely something involved in a series of changes which has no *beginning at all*. He assumes, as the very basis of his definition, that there is nothing, properly speaking, that *begins* a change, that all changes extend back through an *inseparably connected* chain to eternity, and have no *beginning* whatsoever; that even the Deity himself—for his theory does not ex-



clude a Deity of a certain kind—is a part of this chain, and nothing in fact, but the *first minister* in the administration of an immense system of *fatality* which has neither commencement nor termination.

It would certainly be improper to impute Atheism to any man unless he avow it. It is not of Dr Brown that I speak, but of his doctrine, and it is of no small importance that the tendency of his doctrine be distinctly seen. Many, both wise and good men, have, no doubt, embraced the doctrine of *necessity*, but they introduce a distinction between what they call *natural* and *moral* necessity—a distinction which Brown's theory does not admit of—and thus get rid of the consequences that would otherwise ensue; for their *moral* necessity, though not very clearly explained, is merely the regular exercise of *free will*.

4. Dr Brown's theory assumes that *free will* has no existence. The doctrine of free will proceeds upon the principle, that like antecedents in like circumstances *may* be accompanied with unlike consequents: Or, what amounts to the same thing, that although in certain circumstances a certain volition takes place, yet it would be no *contradiction to the constitution of nature* to suppose that in the same circumstances an entirely different volition, or no volition at all, might have taken place. But this principle is destructive of the very essence of Brown's theory. His theory necessarily demands as a *fundamental* postulate that *free will* be rejected altogether, and volition be regarded as merely a link in an infinite chain of *inseparably connected sequences*.

This is certainly a bold postulate. Philosophers



are, no doubt, entitled to inquire into the existence of *free will*, as well as into the existence of any thing else ; but it is surely not treating the common judgment of mankind with due respect, to set out with *the assumption* that there is no free will at all, and that our convictions on this point are not only erroneous, but unworthy of examination. Above all, it seems improper to build on such a postulate an extensive system of opinions, which are not only questionable in point of evidence, but which appear to involve consequences of a nature the most hazardous.

The substance of what Brown states concerning *free will* is contained in the following passage. " It has been usual for philosophers, by a very false distinction, to which their imperfect analysis has led, to term matter *inert*, as if capable only of *continuing* changes, and to distinguish mind as alone *active*, and capable of *beginning* changes. But the assumption of this quality is founded on the difference to which I have alluded, of the continued visibility of the train of changes in matter, while there is only a partial and indirect exhibition to our senses, of the train that is continued in mind. If the whole train could in both cases become visible to us, we should find, that no created mind is capable of beginning spontaneously a series of changes, more than any mass of created matter. All is only a continuance of changes, and often of mutual changes. If, without the intervention of matter, thought arise after thought, and passion after passion ; as often, without the intervention of mind, does the motion of small particles of matter produce in other masses a long series of elementary motions.

If mind often act upon matter, as often does matter act upon mind; and though matter cannot begin a change of itself, when all the preceding circumstances have continued the same, as little, while all the preceding circumstances continue the same, is such a change possible in mind. It does not perceive without the occurrence of an object to be perceived, nor will, without the suggestion of some object of desire. The truth is, that certain changes of mind invariably precede certain other changes of mind, and certain changes of matter certain other changes of matter; and also that certain changes of mind invariably precede certain changes of matter, and certain changes of matter invariably precede certain changes of mind."

5. The theory of Brown is subversive of all our ordinary ideas on the subject of moral obligation. Dr Brown most willingly admits the existence of moral sentiments, and endeavours to explain both their origin and tendency, and also the distinctions between right and wrong to which they give rise. But the moral sentiments for which he pleads are of an entirely different kind from those of the generality of mankind. Mankind usually believe that no moral wrong is attributable to an action, when, in the circumstances of the case, it *could not have been otherwise*,—when it is so connected with things prior, that, *consistently with the constitution of nature*, it behoved to take place. To blame people for what they *could not* avoid, would appear to the generality of mankind very absurd and unwarrantable. But such blame is not only admissible under Brown's system, but the



only sort of blame that is admissible. His *inseparable chain of sequences* renders the performance of a free action altogether impossible, and subjects man, if accountable at all, to some mysterious and strange species of accountability, which arises from doing things which he could by *no possibility omit*.

He tells us, indeed, that our moral sentiments are produced by the perception of certain actions which are fitted to excite them; and this, for any purpose I have at present in view, may be taken as a just account. But are not these actions believed by us to be *free*? Would our sentiments be the same, if the actions were thought to be the result of *necessity*? Would we regard a person as entitled either to approbation or to disapprobation, for doing what we are persuaded he *could not avoid*?

6. The theory of Dr Brown is utterly incompatible with the phenomena of repetition. The import of his doctrine is, that like antecedents, when they occur a *second*, or *third*, or *fourth time*, are always followed by like consequents as at first. The mere circumstance of *repeated occurrence* is not supposed to occasion any difference, but to leave everything exactly as before. The truth, however, certainly is, that *repeated occurrence* is often the occasion of very important differences. Unless we admit that repetition increases the associating power of ideas, a large class of phenomena—indeed, all our intellectual and practical habits—must be utterly inexplicable.

It may be said, I know, that in the case of repetition the antecedents do *not* recur in like circumstances as before—the repetition itself being a new circum-



stance,—and it cannot, therefore, be expected that they should be followed by like consequents. But this is only saying, in other words, that Dr Brown's theory is untenable; for nothing can be more evident, than that, both in stating and explaining it, he proceeds on the supposition, that antecedents do recur in like circumstances as before; and instead of allowing any exceptions, he applies his doctrine universally,—to mind as well as to matter.

7. In order to fortify his theory, Dr Brown maintains that the *properties* or *qualities* of things are the same with their *powers* and *susceptibilities*, and that things are known to us only as the causes of the effects they produce. “The words *property* and *quality*,” says he, “admit of exactly the same definition; expressing only a certain relation of invariable antecedence and consequence, in changes that take place, on the presence of the substance to which they are ascribed. They are strictly synonymous with *power*; or, at least, the only difference is, that *property* and *quality*, as commonly used, comprehend both the *powers* and *susceptibilities* of substances,—the powers of producing changes, and the susceptibilities of being changed. We say equally, that it is a property or quality of water, to melt salt, and that it is one of its qualities or properties to freeze or become solid, on the subtraction of a certain quantity of heat; but we do not commonly use the word power in the latter of these cases, and say that water has the power of being frozen.” In another passage he maintains, that it is only as possessing power that things are conceived by us to exist, “and their powers, therefore,

or efficiencies, are, relatively to us, their whole existence."

These positions I cannot but regard as very extraordinary. The *length*, *breadth*, and *thickness*, of material objects, are usually thought not only to be *qualities*, but the distinguishing qualities which matter possesses. They are looked on as so indispensable to matter, that many have represented them as constituting its very essence. But are *length*, *breadth*, and *thickness*, known to us only as causes? Are they viewed as mere *powers* or *functions*, like the attributes which excite heat, or cold, or taste, or sound, or smell? Dr Brown, in his zeal for his theory, has forgotten the *primary qualities* of matter altogether.

It is true, that matter produces in us a variety of ideas, and that it is in consequence of these ideas we become acquainted with it; but this is very different from knowing it only as the cause of ideas, and leads to very different conclusions. Did we know matter only as the cause of ideas, we never could know it as extended; for causation and extension are surely not the same thing, nor could any one infer the latter from the former.

Dr Brown, indeed, elsewhere remarks, that to know a cause as matter, is to know it "as an *extended* and resisting mass;" but this is merely giving up his position: that it is known to us only as possessing certain *powers*, and that its *powers* or *efficiencies* are, relatively to us, its whole existence. For if it be known to us as *extended*, unquestionably its powers or efficiencies are not, relatively to us, its whole existence; for its length, its breadth, its thickness, its magnitude,



its figure, and various other attributes, are entirely different from its efficiencies, and, relatively to us, these attributes are certainly something,—in fact, the principal endowments which it possesses.

I may also remark, that Dr Brown considers the *causes* of ideas as the same with their *objects*; but here, too, he is manifestly mistaken. The causes of ideas are the circumstances which excite them; but their *objects*, as that word is usually understood, are the things of which the ideas afford us the knowledge. These things are not to be confounded; for, though, on many occasions, the same thing may be both *cause* and *object*, yet on others it is different. In reading a book, for example, there may be suggested to us the idea of some distant body; the body is the object of the idea, the exciting cause is the book.

In making these observations, however, on Dr Brown's theory of causation, I am far from wishing to withhold from him the praise of great ingenuity in conducting his researches, and of having completely unfolded a variety of important phenomena, which had utterly baffled the acuteness of his predecessors. There is one question particularly, though not examined in his *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, on which he has thrown a very distinct light—the immateriality of the soul. Before his time philosophers were much in the practice of representing our different thoughts as a kind of *distinct entities*, resulting from certain *powers* or *faculties*; and from this it did not seem very unwarrantable to infer, that our thoughts might be entities resulting from powers or faculties belonging to *matter*, for matter seems just as capable of



giving rise to such entities as any thing else. There seems no more difficulty, for instance, in conceiving that motion in matter may give rise to thought,—*if thought be a distinct entity*,—than in conceiving that thought may give rise to motion in matter. The two kinds of things, indeed, are totally different; but that no more hinders the former from giving rise to the latter, than the latter from giving rise to the former. Matter is certainly not *more* different from thought, than thought is from matter. Let us adopt, however, the sentiments of Brown, that thought is not a distinct entity at all; that it is merely *a state or condition* of something, and beyond all question, as thought is immaterial, that something must be immaterial likewise; for *matter*, from the very nature of the case, cannot exist in an *immaterial* state.

It must also be observed, that though nothing can be more reprehensible than that species of philosophy, which has no other aim than to subvert the principles of religion and morals, yet every liberty should be given to fair inquiry. If those who direct their attention to the science of mind are to be exposed to the imputation of Atheism whenever they fall into any considerable mistake, they never can conduct their researches with requisite impartiality and freedom. In fact, such imputations have an obvious tendency to make the friends of religion withdraw from this study altogether, and to throw it into the hands of those desperate men who care not for imputations of Atheism, or even glory in them. That truth will ultimately be reached in the science of mind as well as in the science of matter, there can hardly be a doubt;

but in all probability it will not be till we have passed through not a few errors,—some of them perhaps of a very serious kind. I have already mentioned, that I cannot but regard the leading doctrine of Brown's system as pointing to very dangerous conclusions; but far from admitting these conclusions, he distinctly disowns them, and announces a variety of opinions exceedingly analogous to those which have been espoused by many of the most devout men in Christendom. In reality, his doctrine of *necessity* is in no degree more atheistical than that of *contingence*, embraced by Reid and Stewart, and a thousand other philosophers and divines, who allege that their creed is the only orthodox one.

## SECT. VII.

### *Regularity of Volition.*

The actions of human beings are of two kinds,—those of *volition*, and those of the *physical principles* of their constitution. It is the first only which, strictly speaking, are *their own*, for the other are to be ascribed to the author of their nature. Both, however, in common language, are frequently called their own, and both, to a certain extent, are under their own control.

With regard to the regular exercise of our constitutional principles, there can be no doubt. They are merely *physical* energies, and are governed by as regular and even necessary an influence as that which directs things material. Sensation, for instance, as regularly and as necessarily follows an impression on



sense, and one idea as regularly and as necessarily follows another with which it is associated, as the tides of the ocean follow the course of the moon, or the growth of vegetables the introduction of spring.

in the case of volition, however, if the doctrine of a former Section be admitted, there seems room for a different opinion. It was there shown that volition is *free*,—that though all the previous influencing circumstances be the same, the consequent volitions *may* be different, and that volition, therefore, is exempted from the influence of *necessity*. Does it not follow that the exercise of volition must be *contingent*, and consequently *irregular*? This conclusion has been very generally adopted, but let us attend to the consequences.\*

1. Volition, either directly or indirectly, affects the whole of human conduct, which affects, in its turn, an indefinite variety of other things; and if volition therefore be *contingent*, a principle of *chance* is introduced among the works of nature, the extent of which is altogether illimitable.

2. Contingent volition is contrary to the most deep-rooted convictions of the human breast. Volition implies *design*, and is, indeed, the very source of design. To choose, is to perform an action in which we *have a view* to something. But *design* and *contingence* are always believed by mankind to be directly opposite. Some, for example, have maintained that the world was made by a *fortuitous concourse of atoms*;

\* I know of no writer who seems to have had more correct ideas on the subject of the *freedom and regularity* of volition than Bishop Horsley. See Note H.



and it has usually been reckoned a sufficient reply to this doctrine, to show that the world discovers the most decisive marks of a *designing cause*. But if the doctrine of contingent volition be just, the reply is worth nothing; for on such a supposition the world, if it did not proceed from a fortuitous concourse of atoms, must have proceeded from what amounts to the same thing—a *fortuitous concourse of volitions*.

3. Contingent volition is subversive of all moral obligation. The doctrine of *Necessity* is usually met by the formidable objection,—that if people do right from *necessity*, they deserve no praise; and this objection, I imagine, is altogether unanswerable. But who does not see that the same objection is equally unanswerable when applied to *contingence*? for who would praise him who does good from *accident*? If *necessity* be destructive of moral distinctions, beyond all question *contingence* is no less so; and only takes us from the government of *Fate* to place us under the dominion of *Chance*.

But why suppose that volition is *either* necessary or contingent? There is evidently an intermediate alternative,—that though volition is free, yet in the *use* of this freedom we will employ it according to the circumstances presented to us. Volition, as again and again remarked, is something done by *ourselves*. It is, in the strict and proper sense of the expression, an act of our own. Now, if man be free in performing his own actions, how will he use his freedom? Will he give himself up to an absolute casualty? Will he disregard his own interest, and the interest of others, and every other consideration, and live at random?

On the contrary, is it not manifest, from all that we know of his nature, that an entirely different line of conduct will be adopted?—that he will more or less attend to the various objects and events in which he is interested, and act, as already remarked, according to the circumstances presented to him? Let us examine this doctrine a little more particularly.

1. Should a free and intelligent being,—such as man,—observe one set of actions to be *pleasurable*, and another *painful*, will he not choose the former rather than the latter? As pleasure, from its very nature, is agreeable, and pain disagreeable, will he not, in the absence of all other considerations, take the first rather than the second? Is it credible that, without any motive, he should as readily take misery as happiness? Beyond all controversy, no such contingency would happen. The pleasure would be taken, and the pain rejected, as certainly as he and they are in existence. His *power* to take either, far from making him choose at random, would have the very opposite effect, and make him choose the *most agreeable*. The action he performs would indeed be his own, and not like an action in a physical object, the production of some exterior cause, but still it would take place according to the circumstances presented to him, and not from accident. A person may act from himself, and yet act according to the circumstances presented to him, as certainly as if he were an instrument in the hand of another.

The same observations apply to our *propensities*, *habits*, and all our *tendencies to action*, without exception. To yield to such tendencies is *easy* and



*agreeable*, to resist them is *difficult* and *disagreeable*; and though we have *power* to do either, we certainly will not *use* this power so as to do the one as readily as the other. On the contrary,—other things being equal,—we will yield to the tendencies, rather than resist them, and to the stronger, rather than the weaker; and act, with regard to them, as certainly according to the circumstances of our situation, as in the case already mentioned,—that of simple pleasure and pain. In other words, we shall act *regularly*; for, to act according to the circumstances of our situation, and to act regularly, is one and the same thing.

If we look to the actual conduct of mankind, we shall everywhere see these remarks most literally verified. If a person possessed of the ordinary faculties be brought up in England, we no more doubt that he will speak the English language,—though speaking is a voluntary action,—than we doubt the rising and setting of the sun: when a parent sends a child of ordinary capacity to school, we are perfectly persuaded that it will learn to read: when a workman has earned his wages, and needs them for the support of himself and family, we are perfectly persuaded that he will not reject them when offered, nor give them as a present to his wealthy employer: when a witness appears before a court of judicature, we never imagine that, to the ruin of his character, the loss of his fortune, and the jeopardy of his life, he will testify, *without any motive*, a number of manifest falsehoods: when a prince resolves on an embassy to a foreign court, he never doubts the possibility of finding an individual to undertake the honourable employment.



In these and a thousand other instances, we every day see that man can easily be placed in such circumstances,—even by his fellows,—as will as *unquestionably* be followed by certain voluntary actions, as any physical cause is followed by its physical effect.

The question, indeed, would be speedily settled, if, instead of arguing the matter *a priori*, we should appeal to *evident* and *admitted facts*. Let us inquire, not how men *must* act when placed in certain circumstances, but how, in point of fact, they *do* act. How, for instance, do they act, when exposed to the prospect of severe pain? How do they act, when exposed to strong motives of pecuniary interest? Or how do they act, when exposed to the operation of any powerful passion? Are they in the practice, in such cases, of acting *at random*? Can we observe nothing in their conduct but the prevalence of *contingence*? On the contrary, does not every one know, that, in proportion to our acquaintance with their characters, we can tell, even beforehand, the nature of their actions? From our general knowledge of human nature, we can predict, with some accuracy, the conduct of a stranger: with still greater accuracy can we predict the conduct of an acquaintance: and the conduct of an intimate friend, we can predict with almost absolute assurance. These facts inevitably lead to the doctrine of *regularity*, or that human beings act according to the circumstances presented to them.

“Were a man,” says Hume, “whom I know to be honest and opulent, and with whom I live in intimate friendship, to come into my house, where I am surrounded with my servants, I rest assured that he is

not to stab me before he leave it, in order to rob me of my silver standish; and I no more suspect this event, than the falling of the house itself, which is new, and solidly built and founded. *But he may have been seized with a sudden and unknown frenzy.* So may a sudden earthquake arise, and shake and tumble my house about my ears. I shall therefore change the suppositions. I shall say, that I know with certainty, that he is not to put his hand into the fire, and hold it there until it be consumed; and this event I think I can foretell with the same assurance as that, if he throw himself out of the window, and meet no obstruction, he will not remain a moment suspended in the air: no suspicion of an unknown frenzy can give the least possibility to the former event, which is so contrary to all the known principles of human nature. A man who, at noon, leaves his purse full of gold on the pavement at Charing-Cross, may as well expect that it will fly away like a feather, as that he will find it untouched an hour after. Above one half of human reasonings contain inferences of a similar nature, attended with more or less degrees of certainty, proportioned to our experience of the usual conduct of mankind in such particular situations."

2. But, though, when a considerable *preponderance* exists on the one side or the other, our choice may be according to the circumstances presented to us; it perhaps may be thought that the case must be different when the balance is equal, or nearly equal. There is at present, for instance, two shillings before me, and one of them I must give away. It is of no



consequence which one I pitch on; and is not my choice in this case directed by *accident*?

In answer to this question, let it be observed, that the will, as formerly remarked, exercises only a *general superintendence* over our actions, and by no means interferes with each individual one. In going over a poem which is imperfectly committed to memory, the much greater number of the ideas occur spontaneously; and volition is employed only when they do not occur in proper order, or with sufficient readiness; and the same happens in the case of actions. An indefinite multitude of bodily actions, as I shall afterwards show, take place from association; and it is only when they do not take place with such accuracy and quickness as are requisite to the ends we have in view, that volition is resorted to. But such actions do not take place *contingently*. Their causes may not be distinctly perceived, and in common language there can be no harm in calling them *accidental*; but they take place, nevertheless, according to as regular laws as any events whatsoever,—as the movements of electricity, for example, or the changes of the weather.

The real character of the operation above-mentioned may be easily stated. I choose, for some reason or other, to give away one of two shillings. If, when I make this choice, the different steps of the subsequent process take place with sufficient readiness, there is no farther volition necessary. I accomplish my purpose with as little additional aid from volition as when I go over a poem which I have perfectly by heart. If the subsequent process, however, do not take place



with sufficient readiness, I must resort to volition, to call forth the steps that are wanting, just as I do with the poem, should any idea not readily present itself. In neither case, however, is there the smallest *contingence*. In as far as the operation depends upon choice, I can generally tell the very nature of the motive by which I am influenced ; and, in as far as it is spontaneous, it is regulated by the *physical principles of my constitution*, which the Author of Nature has long ago fixed. These principles, indeed, may be affected by very minute circumstances, but that is no objection. All the principles of nature are framed with such marvellous delicacy, that the most trifling circumstance can affect them.

To place the matter in a different light. Suppose that, as each of the two shillings is equally fit for my purpose, I choose to decide between them by the cast of a *die*. In this case my choice is influenced by a very obvious reason,—the *equality* of the two objects,—and so far, therefore, there is no *accident*. In the subsequent steps of the process, there is as little accident. If any obstruction occur to the completion of my design, I make use of choice for its removal, that is, I choose to *do* something for its removal, and for this very *evident reason*, its removal is necessary to the end I have in view. In the movements of the *die itself*, the absence of accident is no less evident, for beyond all question they are governed by as physical and undeviating laws as those which govern the most regular movements in nature.

Now, both these modes of proceeding are essentially the same. The only difference is, that in the first

I employ no instrument but what nature has given me ; whereas, in the second, I employ an artificial instrument. In each case, however, the exercise of volition is resorted to only when necessary to the end I have in view ; and every thing else is the work of nature.

“ Supposing,” says Edwards, in his Inquiry into the Will, “ I have a chess-board before me ; and because I am required by a superior, or desired by a friend, or to make some experiment concerning my own ability and liberty, or on some other consideration, I am determined to touch some one of the spots or squares on the board with my finger ; not being limited or directed in the first proposal, or my own first purpose, which is general, to any one in particular, and there being nothing in the squares, in themselves considered, that recommends any one of all the sixty-four, more than another : in this case, my mind determines to give itself up to what is vulgarly called *accident*, by determining to touch that square which happens to be most in view, which my eye is especially upon at that moment, or which happens to be then most in my mind, or which I shall be directed to by some other such like accident. Here are several steps of the mind’s proceeding ; (though all may be done as it were in a moment.) The *first* step is its *general* determination that it will touch one of the squares. The *next* step is another *general* determination to give itself up to accident, in some certain way ; as to touch that which shall be most in the eye or mind at the time, or to some other such like accident. The *third* and last step is a *particular* determination to touch



a certain individual spot, even that square, which, by that sort of accident the mind has pitched upon, has actually offered itself beyond others. Now it is apparent, that in none of these several steps does the mind proceed in absolute indifference, but in each of them is influenced by a preponderating inducement. So it is in the *first* step; the mind's general determination to touch one of the sixty-four spots. The mind is not absolutely indifferent whether it does so or not; it is induced to it for the sake of making some experiment, or by the desire of a friend, or some other motive that prevails. So is it in the *second* step; the mind's determining to give itself up to accident, by touching that which shall be most in the eye, or the idea of which shall be most prevalent in the mind, &c. The mind is not absolutely indifferent whether it proceeds by this rule or no; but chooses it because it appears at that time a convenient and requisite expedient, in order to fulfil the general purpose aforesaid; and so it is in the *third* and last step, its determining to touch that individual spot which actually does prevail in the mind's view. The mind is not indifferent concerning this; but is influenced by a prevailing inducement and reason, which is, that this is a prosecution of the preceding determination, which appeared requisite, and was fixed before in the second step.

“ Accident will ever serve a man, without hindering him a moment, in such a case. It will always be so among a number of objects in view, one will prevail in the eye, or in idea, beyond others. When we have our eyes open in the clear sunshine, many ob-



jects strike the eye at once, and innumerable images may be at once painted in it by the rays of light; but the attention of the mind is not equal to several of them at once; or if it be, it does not continue so for any time. And so it is with respect to the ideas of the mind in general. Several ideas are not in equal strength in the mind's view and notice at once; or, at least, do not remain so for any sensible continuance. There is not hingin the world more constantly varying, than the ideas of the mind. They do not remain in precisely the same state for the least perceivable space of time."

In giving this long quotation from Edwards, it is not because I agree with every sentiment it contains, but because it shows *generally* how easily the mind may be directed amidst circumstances apparently the most similar.

On innumerable occasions, our conduct has a reference to circumstances about which the will gives no specific decision. When we enter on an undertaking of any extent, we may fix by choice the general mode of proceeding we shall adopt; but in regard to the details, we commonly choose to be directed by circumstances as they occur. But is this latter choice determined by contingency? Is it not the very choice which wisdom prescribes? After the occurrence of the circumstances, we may be equally unable to form any specific decision; and, therefore, till we obtain farther light, we may leave things to their own physical tendencies. But neither is there here any contingency. Precisely, as in the former case, it is the very choice which wisdom prescribes. A mariner,

who sees no reason to prefer one course to another, may choose to leave his vessel to the direction of the winds and the waves; but far from choosing without reason, or without a regard to the circumstances of his situation, it is these very circumstances which form the reason by which his choice is guided. In short, though reasons are not causes,—either physical or efficient,—yet a free and intelligent agent is no more in the practice of acting without a *reason*, than nature is in the practice of acting without a cause.

Perhaps it may be objected, that if volition be free it must be contingent *in itself*, and that its regularity is only the result of its connexion with the other principles of our nature. But this objection is hardly entitled to a serious answer. How would we regard the man who should maintain, that the movements of our limbs are contingent, and when shown their regularity, should allege that he means our limbs *by themselves*, and not as connected with the rest of our body; and that as they are equally capable of moving in various directions—either eastward or westward, or northward or southward—they must be altogether contingent in their movements? The best reply to such a disputant, (if, indeed, he be entitled to any reply,) would be to inform him, that were our limbs disconnected from the rest of our body, they would not move at all. The same reply is sufficient for the objection now referred to. Volition is only a part of our nature; it is intimately connected with other parts, and if separated from them, could perform no operation of any kind, nor even exist.

It may also be objected, that if volition be free,



there must at least be a *possibility* of its contingent exercise. Such a possibility, I imagine, must be admitted; but it amounts to nothing. It is precisely like many other *possibilities*, which, though admitted in argument, can enable us to draw no conclusion respecting *realities*. There is an argumentative *possibility* in favour of the nonexistence of matter. Do we, therefore, believe, that matter is nonexistent? There is an argumentative *possibility* in favour of the supposition, that an hundred millions of dies may cast up an hundred millions of aces for an hundred millions of successive times. Do we, therefore, believe that such events ever happen? There is an argumentative *possibility* in favour of the supposition, that all the children hereafter to be born throughout the whole world, will be females. Do we, therefore, believe they will really be females? The supposition of the possible contingent exercise of volition is equally useless for establishing any conclusion respecting *realities*. It is one of those abstractions of the understanding, which we must admit in argument, but which leads to no inference respecting what *really takes place*.

The truth is, that even when things are not only *possible*, but *perfectly easy*, they afford no ground for concluding respecting *realities*. It is perfectly easy for the Almighty to form a *centaur*; but do we ever believe, that among all the countless myriads of creatures he has formed, a *real centaur* anywhere exists? It is perfectly easy for the Almighty to unite a rational soul to brute unorganized matter; but though the world is full of such matter, and is actually composed of it, do we believe that a single parti-



cle of it is *really* united to a rational soul? It is perfectly easy for the Almighty, by an instantaneous act of his will, to transmute vegetables into animals, and animals into vegetables; but do we believe that he ever performs such transmutations? In no case whatever, are we warranted to reason from mere *possibilities*—even of the simplest kind—to *realities*: And although it were admitted, therefore, that the contingent exercise of volition is not only *possible*, but perfectly *easy*, we are just as far from any inference respecting its *actual* contingency as before. Free and intelligent beings, in acting from themselves, do not act according to *mere possibilities*, but according to what they *perceive* and *feel*.

Would the abettors of the contingent exercise of volition only reflect, that their doctrine completely overturns the very principles which they wish to establish by it, they would soon see its character. Their great object is to lay a sure foundation for religion and morals in opposition to *necessity*; but how *contingence* can enable them to do this, it would puzzle the wisest of them to explain. Is an action either religious or moral because it happens by *accident*? or is a man the more praiseworthy the more he acts *at random*? Besides, if contingency be once admitted among the works of God, there is no setting limits to its sway. Things are so marvellously adjusted under the government of Heaven, that, as some have remarked, a single particle of dust going to the *right*, when the laws of nature require it should go to the *left*, would ultimately, without miraculous interposition, alter the whole frame of the universe; and a single act of real

contingence, there cannot be a doubt, would have results equally extensive.

In short, whatever view we take of the subject, there seems no other alternative than that already mentioned,—that though man has power to perform many different acts of choice, or no act of choice at all, yet, in *using* this power, he will, *in point of fact*, act according to the circumstances in which he is placed. Not a day, not an hour passes, but we ourselves place our fellow men in circumstances, which, in perfect consistency with their freedom of choice, are *as indubitably* followed by certain voluntary actions, as the presence of fire is followed by the sensation of heat, and the rotation of the earth on its axis by the alternation of day and night.

#### SECT. VIII.

*Nature of the Relation between Volition and the Circumstances on which its Regularity depends—Influence of Motives.*

THE circumstances in which we are placed, in so far as volition is regulated by them, are usually styled *Motives*. Motives, therefore, are not a distinct set of entities, but any kind of entities whatsoever which influence volition. Pleasure, for instance, may be a motive, pain may be a motive, friendship may be a motive, enmity may be a motive, a favourable season may be a motive, an unfavourable season may be a motive, fire may be a motive, water may be a motive, snow and ice may be motives. In short, every thing



in the universe which the mind can conceive, may become a motive. To prepare the way for understanding the nature of the relation between motives and volition, let the following observations be attended to.

1. Nothing can ever be regarded as a motive, unless we obtain some *knowledge* of it. Neither pleasure nor pain, neither friendship nor enmity, neither duty nor interest, nor any other species of motive whatever, can have the smallest degree of *motive power* over us, while we remain ignorant of it. It would be absurd, indeed, to suppose that we may be influenced by motives of which we know nothing, or that we can be influenced by them any farther than we know them.

2. Motives do not operate *physically*. Our knowledge or ideas of things often act physically. When one idea suggests another by virtue of association, the process is as purely physical as the change produced in a material substance by mechanical impulse: and when an idea produces a movement in the members of our body, (and ideas, as I shall afterwards show, frequently produce such movements,) the process is no less physical.\* In both cases, the ideas produce the effects, with as little power of resisting the tendency which nature has impressed on them, and in every respect with as complete a *necessity*, as the earth revolves on its axis, the wind blows in the heavens, or the fruits of the earth shoot forth in their seasons.

\* Let it be remembered, that by *physical* influence I always mean *necessary* influence, or influence that, in so far as the agency of man is concerned, operates *spontaneously*. Volition is the only source of *moral* influence.



But in so far as any thing acts physically, it is never styled a motive. The idea of a friend may recall to our recollection some interesting scene which we witnessed in his company; but we would not style the idea the motive of the recollection, but only the cause or the occasion of it.

3. Motives do not supersede our own agency. If an organic sensation excite a sensation, or an interesting perception excite an emotion, we are not *active*, but *passive*,—we do not *act*, but are *acted upon*. But the case is totally different where motives are concerned. *We ourselves* then act, and motives, instead of destroying or even impairing our agency, only afford us an opportunity of rightly exerting it. If a person, for instance, give a guinea for the relief of the distressed, the relief is the motive of his gift, but the action is nevertheless *his own*, and his agency in it is not in the slightest degree impaired by its proceeding from a motive.

What, then, is the office of motives? They occur on all occasions, and must be of some use. Their only office, I imagine, is to afford *knowledge to the understanding*, and thus direct us in the exercise of volition. In reality, if they neither act as physical causes, nor impair our own agency, it is impossible to conceive them to have any other office; and when we look to facts, we find that this is the very office to which they are applied. A person, for example, informs us, that if we pursue a certain line of conduct, we shall experience *good*; that if we pursue another, we shall experience *evil*. In consequence of this *information*,

we choose the former, and avoid the latter, and the *information* is styled the *motive* of our choice. But nothing seems more evident, than that the information does not *act* on our will at all;—it merely gives us *passive knowledge*, according to which *we ourselves choose to act*. The use of motives, in as far as their *motive character* is concerned, is the same in every case. They merely give knowledge or information, for the direction of choice: or, what amounts to the same thing, *they are merely the circumstances in which we are placed, observed by the mind, and forming the rule according to which we employ volition*. A connexion certainly exists between them and the will; but it is not a physical, but merely a *voluntary* connexion, (some would call it a *moral* one,) and is occasioned by the will itself. In other words, man himself chooses to act *according to the knowledge which motives afford*, and thus establishes a connexion between them and his choice.\*

This account of motives completely accords with every aspect which they present. Volition, as formerly shown, is *free* in its exercise, and knowledge, it is evident, does not in the smallest degree impair its freedom. It only affords an opportunity of rightly employing it. Volition was also shown to be *regular* in its exercise; and as little does knowledge impair its regularity. It is only the means by which regularity is attained, for there evidently can be no regularity

\* This falls in very exactly with the old doctrine, that the will follows the dictates of the understanding.



without knowledge. Knowledge must be at the foundation of all regularity.

The phenomena of morals—phenomena with which free and regular volition is closely connected—are equally accordant with the above view of motives. The common doctrine concerning morals is, that the inferior principles of our nature,—such as sensation, association, perception, affections, passions, habits, &c. act on the *will*, while the *will*, having considerable power of its own, can either obey or resist them; and that our deserving praise or blame depends on the use which we make of this power. The import of the doctrine I have proposed is, that the inferior principles of our nature do not act on the will at all; that it is the will which acts on them, and that our deserving praise or blame depends on the use which we make of this power. This doctrine is as consistent with morals as the other, and it will be found to afford a number of facilities for explaining the phenomena which the other does not.

It is more conformable, too, I may remark, with the character of a *governing* faculty, which the *will* is universally allowed to be. It exhibits volition as receiving *information* from the inferior principles of our nature, and making its own use of it, but as acted on by none of them. It presents volition as an *Overseer* at the head of the other parts of our frame, interfering with their conduct, or leaving them to themselves according to its pleasure; but as being itself entirely beyond their dominion. This is precisely the rank which a governing faculty should occupy, and a doctrine which assigns to volition such a



rank, has certainly, *prima facie*, considerable evidence in its favour.

The difficulties which philosophers have experienced in explaining the nature of motives, have chiefly proceeded from their overlooking the fact, that motives are merely the circumstances in which we are placed, viewed under a *particular aspect*. These circumstances may be viewed in two lights,—either as things which act *physically*, or as things which afford information, according to which *we ourselves* may act; and the very same circumstances, in reference to the very same objects, may be viewed in both lights. A person, for example, of intemperate habits, may have presented to him some favourite gratification, and the prospect of enjoying it may exert over him a very powerful *physical* sway,—for all habits act *physically*. But the same prospect must evidently convey to him a certain kind of *information*. It must inform him of the pleasure he will obtain if he yield to his habits; of the pain he will feel, if he resist them, and probably of various other particulars; and in consequence of this *information*, the person, by *an act of his own choice*, may agree to enjoy the gratification. It is only when the prospect is viewed under the latter aspect that it can properly be called a *motive*: And so in all other cases.\* Suppose, however, that philosophers

\* There is no absurdity in the world in supposing that things may possess physical influence, and yet be regarded by the mind as *motives*. In reality, every thing that is a motive has some *physical* influence. A good season, for instance, is a motive to gratitude, but surely a good season has much physical influence? the light of the sun is also a motive to gratitude, but the light of the sun has likewise much physical influence.

overlook the distinction now mentioned, and include in their account of motives physical influence also, and it is easy to see what confusion will ensue ; and that they will sometimes represent motives as *physical causes*, sometimes as *sources of information*, and sometimes as a kind of *intermediate entities*, possessed in part of the attributes of both, but unfit to be ranked in the same class with either. In short, as a kind of entities entirely *sui generis*.

This is literally the way in which philosophers *do* represent motives. Dr Reid, for example, in speaking of what he calls animal motives, tells us that "hunger is a *motive* in a dog to eat ; so is it in a man. According to the strength of the appetite, it gives a stronger or a weaker impulse to eat. And the same thing may be said of every other appetite and passion. Such animal motives give an impulse to the agent, to which he yields with ease ; and if the impulse be strong, it cannot be resisted without an effort which requires a greater or less degree of self-command. Such motives are not addressed to the rational powers. *Their influence is immediately upon the will.* We feel their influence, and judge of their strength, by the conscious effort which is necessary to resist them."

Here Dr Reid represents animal motives as exerting their influence immediately on the will, and acting by impulse ; but except when the words are used metaphorically, it is impossible to conceive what is meant by an impulse on the will. His mentioning hunger as a motive in a dog to eat, is a clear indication that he misapprehended the whole character of



motives. Neither a dog, nor any of the lower animals, is possessed of *free agency*, and cannot, therefore, be guided by motives at all. Motives can only apply to free and intelligent beings. The animal motives which Reid speaks of are merely circumstances operating *physically*.

In another passage, Dr Reid says, that "rational beings, in proportion as they are wise and good, will act *according* to the best motives; and every rational being who does otherwise, abuses his liberty. The most perfect being in every thing where there is a right and a wrong, a better and a worse, always infallibly acts *according* to the best motives. This, indeed, is little less than an identical proposition; for it is a contradiction to say, that a perfect being does what is wrong or unreasonable. But to say that he does not act freely, because he always does what is best, is to say, that the proper use of liberty destroys liberty, and that liberty consists only in its abuse."

Here Dr Reid, so far as his account goes, gives a very correct view of motives, and distinctly speaks of them not as exerting any *influence* on volition, but as things *according to which* volition itself acts. In other passages, however, it is difficult to say what his meaning is. "I grant," says he, "that all rational beings are *influenced*, and ought to be *influenced*, by motives. But the influence of motives is of a very different nature from that of efficient causes. They are neither causes nor agents. They suppose an efficient cause, and can do nothing without it. We cannot, without an absurdity, suppose a motive, either to act, or to be acted upon; it is equally incapable of action



and passion ; because it is not a thing that exerts, but a thing that is conceived ; it is what the schoolmen call an *ens rationis*. Motives, therefore, may *influence* to action, but they do not act. They may be compared to advice or exhortation, which leaves a man still at liberty. For in vain is advice given when there is not a power either to do, or to forbear, what it recommends. In like manner, motives suppose liberty in the agent, otherwise they have no influence at all."

What is the meaning of the word *influence* in this passage? Or how can things have influence that have no *active power*? Is not *active power* and *influence*, in the common acceptation of the expressions, one and the same thing? Dr Reid nowhere explains the import of the word *influence* when applied to motives, although it is the very hinge on which a great many of the most important questions in philosophy turn.

The common people often speak of motives, both as a kind of physical causes, and also as mere sources of information. They speak of them under the former aspect, when they represent them as having *power to excite* our choice, to *move* our choice, to *influence* our choice. The very word *motive* has a physical aspect ; and under the latter, when they represent them as the *reasons* of choice, the *grounds* of choice, or things which we have *in view*, in the exercise of choice.\*

\* I may here remark, that the circumstances which direct us in the exercise of volition, when it is employed in controlling *belief*, are usually called *evidence* ; that the circumstances which direct us in the exercise of volition, when it is employed in controlling *actions*, are usually called *motives* ; and that *reason* is the general term which applies to both. Hence, we may say, with the same

The common people, however, are perfectly aware, that motives are essentially different from physical causes; and when they speak of them under a physical aspect, they always soften their language as much as possible. They never speak of them as *compelling*, or *forcing*, or *necessitating* us to choose things, but only as *influencing*, or *inducing*, or *leading* us to choose them. The *irresistible* power of motives, their *necessary* power, their *invincible* power, and other such expressions, which bring physical influence *palpably* and *glaringly* into notice, are to be found only in the writings of philosophers.

The common people, too, never speak of the lower animals as governed by motives, except when they speak metaphorically. They know very well, that motives belong only to free agents, and that all the lower animals act necessarily and physically. In fact, no sooner do they observe a human being to be swayed by an influence that seems to be ungovernable, than they cease to regard him as being guided by motives, and view him as acting under a different influence.

propriety, that we have good *reason* for believing such a thing, and also, that we have good *reason* for *doing* such a thing. In short, *reason* is not a distinct principle of the mind, but merely what is usually called the principle of *knowledge* or *intelligence*, viewed as *affording information for the guidance of volition*.

I may add, that although *belief* is regarded, by some modern writers, as in no degree subject to the control of volition; yet, by less recent writers, it was regarded as being as much controlled by it as actions. Des Cartes and Malebranche were plainly of this opinion; and I hope to be able afterwards to show, that this is the only correct doctrine on the subject.†

† See Note R.



They would not, for instance, represent a person in the fury of anger as being guided by motives, but as guided by the violence of his passion.

I am not aware of any considerable objection that can be made to the account of motives now given, unless it be the following: Motives, it may be said, possess different degrees of power, and their different degrees of power can be nothing but their different degrees of influence on the will. If one motive be more powerful than another, what can their difference in this respect be, but the different degrees of influence they exert over volition? This objection is easily answered. Motives obtain from *us* different degrees of *preference*; and it is these degrees of *preference* that constitute what are called their degrees of power. One line of conduct, for example, presents to us the prospect of gaining *ten* pounds; another the prospect of gaining *twenty*. *We prefer* the latter sum to the former; and the latter, therefore, is said to be a more powerful motive than the former. But here it is manifest, that neither of the motives acts on volition at all. It is volition that acts *according to them*, and their comparative power is merely the comparative preference which *we* give them.

The power of motives (and which is sometimes called *moral power*) is really a species of *misnomer*. It is a kind of misapplication of language, in which power is ascribed, not to the agent who exerts it, but to the circumstances *according to which* it is exerted. It is a mode of speaking, however, which cannot well be dispensed with, as language does not afford a more suitable expression for indicating what it denotes. To



reject the phrases, *the power of motives over the will, the influence of motives over the will, the force of motives over the will, &c.* because the power, and influence, and force, is not exerted by the motives, but by the will itself, would be found exceedingly inconvenient.

Whoever would understand the moral nature of man, should endeavour to make himself well acquainted with what has been called *moral power*, or *the power of motives*. It is the want of precise and steady ideas on this point, that has chiefly involved the philosophy of morals in so much perplexity. If the doctrine I have stated be just, the *power of motives* is easily understood. The expression is merely a species of *antonomasia*, and does not mean that motives exert any power on volition at all ; but that volition exerts its power *according to the information* which motives present to it. With this simple view of the matter, we escape at once almost every difficulty, and can solve the most important questions with the utmost readiness.

To give a short summary of what has been mentioned concerning volition.—All our inferior principles, such as sensation, association, perception, memory, affections, passions, dispositions, habits, &c. are mere *natural principles*, and operate physically. They operate, of course, according to physical laws, and do not require any exertion on the part of the mind itself. In consequence, however, of the power of attention or volition, the mind can interfere with them whenever it thinks proper, and control them for the different purposes it has in view. This power is of such a nature, that in the same, or similar circumstances,

it *can* produce any one of a number of different effects; and it is quite compatible, therefore, with the existence of the laws of nature, that any of these effects should take place. Hence, though we may be able to trace a series of results up through a chain of necessary connexions to the exercise of volition, yet we cannot trace them in this way any farther. In other words, in the employment of volition, the mind *begins* results, and consequently, in the strict and proper sense of the expression, is their *source*.

Though in the use of volition, however, we are not *restricted* to a particular course of action, it by no means follows, that we shall conduct ourselves *contingently*, or *at random*. On the contrary, being *intelligent*, as well as *free agents*, we will certainly conduct ourselves according to the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed. These circumstances, when viewed as affording information according to which volition is employed, are styled motives; and, though they often act physically, yet in their character of *motives*, they do not, strictly speaking, act at all. It is the mind that acts *according* to them. It is common, indeed, to speak of the *power of motives*, of the *influence of motives*, of the *strength of motives*, &c.; and it would be very inconvenient to lay aside such expressions. They do not, however, really denote any *power*, or *influence*, or *strength*, exerted by motives themselves, but that *power*, or *influence*, or *strength*, is exerted by the mind, according to the information they afford. To characterise this use of the word *power*, the epithet moral is sometimes affix-

ed to it; and hence such expressions as *moral power*, *moral influence*, *moral strength*, &c.\*

## SECT. IX.

### *Moral and Theological Conclusions.*

THE distinction between the agency of man and the agency of nature, involves many questions in religion and morals, of very high importance; and whoever would illustrate the science of mind, should have this distinction constantly in his eye. As to the agency of man, there can be no doubt. It consists entirely in the exercise of volition or choice. When two or more objects are presented to us, we can choose either of them, or none of them; and in this choice our whole agency respecting them is comprised. In reference to such a being as man, *volition* and *agency* are merely different names for one and the same thing, viewed under different aspects.

Some, perhaps, may imagine, that the effects of volition are also to be ascribed to human agency; but the least reflection may satisfy us, that such an opinion is by no means well founded. If we choose, for instance, to perform an outward action, it is we who perform the act of choice, but it is not we who make the choice

\* The *power* of motives, is nothing but the degree of preference which the mind gives them. Were this observation duly attended to, simple though it is, it would enable us to understand very exactly the nature of what is usually called *moral power*, *moral influence*, &c. I may add, that to act *according* to a motive, is merely to perform an action for the attainment or accomplishment of something which the motive presents to us.



move certain nerves, the nerves move certain muscles, and the muscles move certain exterior members. These movements are all performed by the physical laws of our nature, and our agency is limited to the choice alone.

As the agency of man comprehends nothing but the exercise of volition, the agency of nature, or rather of the Author of nature, must comprehend every thing besides,—must comprehend all the operations of the material universe, the formation and preservation of the power of volition itself, the circumstances by which the exercise of volition is preceded, the results by which its exercise is followed, and, in short, every thing that has being, or that takes place, with the single exception of the exercise of volition alone.

This doctrine, so far as I know, is universally admitted,—except by the advocates of atheism. Some, with Stewart, may believe that the agency of God is constantly and *exclusively* employed; others, with Brown, that his agency only endowed things with certain powers at first, and ordained the future use they should make of them; but all the friends of Theism regard the agency of God as either immediately or remotely the cause of every thing that exists, or that takes place, with the exception already stated—the exercise of volition.

It is particularly necessary to remember, that *motives*, or the circumstances by which volition is regulated, depend on the agency of God,—whether these circumstances consist of sensations, perceptions, recollections, affections, passions, habits, or any other species of influence. Sometimes, indeed, it would seem

that a subsequent volition may depend on the existence of a preceding one ; but in reality this can never be the case, without the interposition of the laws of nature. Even though we perform an act of volition, as the express consequence of a preceding one, the laws of nature must *intervene* ; for the first act must be *remembered* at the time we perform the second, and beyond all doubt, *remembrance* is to be ascribed to the laws of nature.

In these observations, however, I am reasoning without an adversary ; for all admit, that motives are not to be ascribed to our own agency, but to the agency of our Maker.\*

I may add, that even although this point were conceded, the *certainty* of any act of volition would not be diminished. If a person, for instance, to avoid a lawsuit, choose to give a faithful servant a sum of money to pay a tradesman an account about which he is clamorous, not only is the volition of the person placed in such circumstances that he chooses to give the servant the money ; the volition of the servant, on receiving the money, is placed in such circumstances, that he *certainly* chooses to offer payment ; and the volition of the tradesman, on the offer of payment, is placed in such circumstances, that he *no less certainly* chooses to accept it. So that the last volition of the series, though the whole are free, is equally *certain* with the first. The same thing holds in the pro-

\* The connexion between the agency of *God* and the agency of *man*, is merely the connexion between *motives* and *volition*. It is this connexion which forms the exact point where the one agency ends and the other begins.



cedure of God. If he can arrange the motives or regulating circumstances of the first of any series of volitions, he can give the *same certainty* to the ultimate result, whether the series be long or short, whether it comprehend few volitions or a great number.\*

The consequences which result from the distinction between the agency of God and the agency of man, are well entitled to the most careful examination. Some of them, indeed, involve questions of a very mysterious nature, and such as seem hardly fit for the grasp of human reason; but if the principles I have stated be just, a considerable number of them may be determined without much trouble. I shall advert only to those which, in different ages, have obtained some attention from mankind.

1. In perfect consistency with the free will of man, the Almighty can insure the accomplishment of whatever he pleases. Nothing seems at first sight more marvellous than the government of God over his free and intelligent creatures. His government of the material world does not present any thing that seems directly *contradictory*. Every thing is grand and

\* The opposite doctrines of *necessity* and *contingence* have been exhibited in a thousand different forms, by their respective abettors; but, in spite of every effort to disguise the truth, the former is nothing but an ill-explained modification of the old doctrine of the *Stoics* concerning *Fate*, and the latter an equally ill-explained modification of the old doctrine of the *Epicureans* concerning *Chance*. In reality, there is no intelligible medium between these extremes, but that of *Regular Freedom*; and all that has been written, in modern times, respecting *necessary* and *contingent volition*, whether by philosophers or divines, is merely the old doctrine in a new form, and stated with much less distinctness.



mysterious, but every thing, at the same time, is without the appearance of direct incompatibility. His government of the mental world presents a very different scene. If human beings possess free will, it seems a complete contradiction to suppose that any exercise of volition can be rendered *indubitably certain*; and yet if it cannot, it seems perfectly manifest that nothing else can. Volition is so closely connected with all the other phenomena of nature, that if it be *contingent*, the influence of *contingence* must extend everywhere, and chance prevail throughout the whole universe. Even a single contingent volition, without miraculous interposition, must derange every thing.

But let us take a closer view of the subject. We have already seen that man, limited in all his faculties although he is, can easily place his fellows in such circumstances as will as *indubitably* be followed by certain free and voluntary actions, as any physical cause is followed by its physical effects. If a person be brought up in England, we are perfectly persuaded, as I formerly remarked, that he will speak *English*, and not *French* or *German*. If a child of ordinary capacity be sent to school, we are perfectly persuaded that it will learn to read,—and so in ten thousand other instances. Now, if in many cases *man* can render *indubitably certain* the free and voluntary actions of his fellows, without destroying or even impairing their freedom of will, may not the Almighty do the same, and do the same in *every case*? In ascribing to the Most High this power, there is no new principle assumed. We merely ascribe to God a *complete* degree of that power which man is acknowledged

to possess *in part*. We merely maintain, that what man can do *imperfectly*, God can do *fully*; and that what man can do in *many* cases, God can do in *every* case. The Almighty has unquestionably this power. He who is God over all, must certainly be able to work all things after the counsel of his own will, and in consistency with the attributes he has bestowed on his creatures,—even his free and intelligent creatures—bring to pass whatever he sees meet.

In this, as in some other questions, philosophers have looked too far off for an explanation, when they might have had one at hand. They have been so struck with the seeming incompatibility of free volition with regular and certain government, as to imagine that the principle which reconciles them,—if they be reconcilable at all,—must be exceedingly mystical, and very remote from ordinary apprehension. The truth, however, is, this principle is in incessant operation in cases the most obvious. Not a day, not an hour, not a minute passes, but *human beings* are rendering the volitions of others as certain as the operations of mere physical and material instruments. In such circumstances to imagine there is any impossibility of reconciling the certainty of the *divine government* with the free will of man, is very extraordinary. It is to overlook the most evident and frequent phenomena which nature exhibits,—the phenomena too which bear most directly and palpably on the subject, and in which we ourselves are continually taking an active concern.

To illustrate the point a little farther. Suppose that an agriculturist of adequate capital intends to



improve a particular field—to dig out the stones, to trench the soil, to surround it with a fence, to lime it, dung it, plough it, sow it, harrow it, and, ultimately, reap and sell the produce. Here is a long series of complex operations, in which he must directly and indirectly employ an indefinite multitude of human beings, of various talents and habits and dispositions, and all of them possessed of *free will*. But does he ever on that account doubt that money will procure their services? He may question the practicability of his undertaking on *physical grounds*, but as to *human co-operation*,—his procuring the *agency of human beings*,—he has no question whatever. He is as certain that he can secure it, as that there are human beings in existence. If an ordinary agriculturist can exercise over *free will* such indubitable control, although his measures involve an indefinite amount of *toil* and *perseverance* and *combination*, what strange ideas must we have of the Divine Being if we think that he can exercise only a *contingent* and *doubtful* control! To take another instance:

Our own resolutions, and promises, and engagements, do not destroy our freedom of will, nor even impair it. *After* we have formed the most deliberate purposes, given the most solemn assurances, and entered into the most explicit covenants, our freedom of will is as entire as before, and consequently our power to act is as entire as before. But in consequence of our resolutions, and promises, and engagements, are not particular actions, or particular series of actions, rendered more certain? If a man of wealth and integrity engage to contribute a few pounds to



some benevolent object, is there not every reason to believe that he will perform his engagement? Would we listen for a moment to the ridiculous argumentation of a nonsensical metaphysician, who should tell us, that this man of wealth and integrity is possessed of *free will*; that *free will*, from its very nature, is *contingent*; that all the actions which depend on it must be contingent likewise; and of course, that it is a matter of *entire uncertainty*,—of *perfect accident*,—whether he ever contribute a farthing? Every one of common judgment would deride such reasoning. It is opposed to the daily and hourly experience of life, and the very person by whom it is advanced would not himself venture to act on it.

The doctrine which claims for God the power of *indubitably controlling* free will, is precisely the same *in principle*. The only difference is, that the power which in man is limited, in God is unlimited. It is needless, however, to dwell longer on so obvious a case.

2. Though the Almighty can insure the existence of any act of volition, he is not to be regarded as its *author*. If a benefactor give alms to a person soliciting charity, the benefactor is not the author of the act of *accepting* the charity, but merely of the act of giving it. The one act may indubitably follow the other; but all who admit the doctrine of free volition, will allow that their authors are two different persons. The same is the case under the procedure of God. He may place man in such circumstances that certain volitions will indubitably ensue; but still he is not the author of these volitions, but merely of the cir-

cumstances according to which man performs them. It is man who is the author of the volitions, and not God. To place the matter in a different light :

Suppose, that, in point of fact, the whole agency of God is limited to placing us in certain circumstances, and that he exercises no agency whatever in the volitions which follow. In this case, it is manifest that we ourselves would be the authors of our volitions. In other words, the efficient energy employed in their production would be our own, and not God's. Now, so far as we can judge, this is literally what happens. The Almighty places us in certain circumstances, but does not carry his agency into the consequent volitions. He merely *allows* us to perform volitions according to the circumstances in which he hath placed us.

3. As the Almighty is not the author of our volitions, he is not chargeable with our sins. A person may place others, and purposely place them, in such circumstances as will indubitably be followed by certain criminal actions, and yet be himself entirely blameless. A prince, for example, may lead an army into a situation where he knows for certain it will give way to much iniquity ; and yet in doing so, be acting a part that is not only innocent, but highly praiseworthy. The situation may be such, that it is his duty to occupy it to prevent the destruction of his country ; and as he takes not from his soldiers the power of free agency, though he knows they will abuse it, it is not he, but they who are to blame. And in every case, without a single exception, when a particular course is prescribed by duty, we are blameless in adopting it, though it should indubitably be the



occasion of much accessory guilt. To suppose that we may lawfully neglect our duty, because others will take occasion from our performance of it to do what is evil, is contrary alike to reason and revelation. And if *man*, without partaking of their guilt, may place others in circumstances that the commission of sin will indubitably follow; unquestionably, the Almighty may do the same. In conducting the government of the universe, he has purposes of infinite importance to accomplish; and who will allege that he should change his procedure, because some of his creatures, to whom he has given power to do right, will violate their obligations, and do what is wrong? Is it not far more consistent with the awful sovereignty of his character to suppose that he will adhere to the counsels of his own will, and adapt them no farther to the guilt of his creatures than is calculated to advance the designs of his glory?\*

4. Though the Almighty is not chargeable with our sins, he may nevertheless resolve on what implies their existence, and even make use of them for accomplishing his purposes. Were a person desirous of promoting the gospel among the heathen, and, the better to fit himself for the undertaking, to resolve on exposing himself for a few years to the injustice and violence of some barbarous tribe in his neighbourhood; it is obvious, that the sinfulness of these barbarians would be implied in his resolution; and if he carried

\* I must here remark, that I am far from pretending to be able to explain every thing connected with the subject referred to in the text. If my doctrine be received as true, *so far as it goes*, it is all that I aim at. See note I.



his resolution into effect, would actually be made use of for accomplishing the end he had in view; but still it could not be said that he ordained their sinfulness, but merely that, being sinful, he made use of them for advancing his benevolent object. The Almighty often acts in a similar way. He ordained that the Redeemer of mankind should be exposed to the violence of sinners; but he certainly did not ordain their sins, but merely that, being sinful, the Redeemer should suffer by them.

5. Though the Almighty is not chargeable with our sins, he may, nevertheless, deserve praise for our virtues. Were a master to place a servant in circumstances which would indubitably be accompanied with the commission of sin, and for the purpose of making him commit sin; both the master and the servant would be guilty of the sin that ensued,—the master for placing him in the circumstances, and the servant for yielding to their influence. Were a master to place a servant in circumstances which would be indubitably accompanied with sin, but do so in obedience to the claims of duty, the servant alone would be guilty, and the master would be free. And, in fine, were a master, without violating duty, to place a servant in circumstances favourable to his avoiding sin, and for the purpose of his avoiding it, the servant, if he sinned, would be guilty, and the master would not only be free, but would even deserve praise. This last case has a close analogy to many parts of the procedure of God. The whole tenor of Inspiration shows, that he not only places the true followers of his Son in circumstances favourable to their avoiding sin, but

for the very purpose of their avoiding it: and of course his purposes have a more intimate connexion with them than with others, and with their good actions than with their bad ones. They themselves are chargeable with the sins they commit, but he deserves praise for their performance of duty.

6. The divine purposes and the free will of man are perfectly reconcilable. This may be easily understood from what has been already mentioned; for if the Almighty can insure the accomplishment of whatever he pleases consistently with the free will of man, and even by means of it, he undoubtedly can *purpose* to insure the accomplishment of whatever he pleases in this way. If he can place mankind in such circumstances that certain volitions will indubitably though freely ensue, he can beyond all controversy determine beforehand to place them in such circumstances.

This principle is the foundation of the doctrine, that all things which happen in time,—even those which relate to free agency in human beings,—could easily be arranged in the councils of Heaven from all eternity. The Almighty, for example, could easily purpose to place mankind in certain circumstances; he could easily know that if he placed them in these circumstances, certain free and voluntary actions would indubitably ensue; and he could no less easily purpose, that on their ensuing, certain rewards, or certain punishments, or certain privileges, as to his own wisdom, and justice, and mercy might seem meet, should be conferred. This, indeed, is making some of the purposes of God have a respect to his foreknowledge of the volitions of men; but it is to a foreknowledge,



it must be observed, that is founded on the arrangements of his own wisdom, and is totally different in kind from that which is founded on *contingence*,—if, indeed, contingency can be the foundation of any foreknowledge,—and arises from his acquaintance with the circumstances in which he himself has resolved to place man. He has appointed, for instance, many things to happen from his foreknowledge of our sins; but our sins follow so certainly,—I do not say necessarily,—the circumstances in which we are placed, that even we ourselves often foreknow them. We know that if a drunkard be placed in certain circumstances to-morrow evening, he will as unquestionably go to excess, free agent although he be, as we know that the sun will descend below the horizon.

In order to make the divine purposes comprehend every thing that takes place, they have been divided by some into two kinds,—*simply effective*, such as all those which relate to mere physical operations; and, *effective and permissive*, such as all those which relate to the exercise of volition. These last receive their double designation, because though they *effectively* produce the circumstances according to which the volitions take place, they do not produce the volitions themselves, but merely *permit* free agents to produce them.

I confess, however, that this distinction, though susceptible of a very sound meaning, is apt to lead to modes of speaking which ordinary people are liable to misunderstand. Among others, it leads to this,—that God himself has ordained man from all eternity to commit every sin of which he is guilty. This lan-



guage, in its ordinary acceptation, is not only false, but in the highest degree blasphemous, and such as must shock every well-disposed mind that has not been long familiarized with the awkward style of a technical theology.

Many seem disposed to imagine that man has no right to inquire into the subject of the divine purposes ; and unquestionably, when we engage in such an inquiry, it ought to be with feelings of the most profound humility and reverence. But the same reason that would exclude the purposes of the Almighty from inquiry, would equally exclude his being and perfections, and even the ordinary course of his providence. When we attempt to show that all things are full of God ; that in him we live, and move, and have our being ; that in perfect consistency with the free agency and accountableness of man, he brings to pass whatever he pleases, we are not supposed to transgress the limits of legitimate and even devout inquiry. And when we refer every thing to his *purposes*, what more do we do, than maintain that what the Almighty accomplishes in time, he meant to accomplish from all eternity ? that in conducting the government of his creatures,—even his free and intelligent and accountable creatures,—he is never taken at an unawares, is never reduced to the necessity of resorting to unexpected and temporary expedients, but is merely carrying into effect the different parts of one grand and incomprehensible system of operations, all the details of which, from the least to the greatest, were arranged in his wisdom and sovereignty from all everlasting ? There is nothing here

that indicates presumption, or that is calculated to foster it. Every thing may be perverted—even truths the most valuable; but we are not to throw aside sublime and interesting doctrines for such a consideration.

7. How comes it to pass that the exercise of many of our dispositions, affections, and passions, &c. is regarded as blamable, though it plainly takes place by the agency of nature? A person, for example, engages in the labours of honest industry, to provide for his support in sickness and old age. He neither wishes nor means to apply his savings to evil, and yet in the prosecution of his lawful, and even praiseworthy toils, the influence of nature to which he is subject, gradually forms in him such a love of money for its own sake, that after he has earned a competency he cannot enjoy it; and what is worse, and the chief thing at present to be attended to,—all men blame him for that spirit of avarice which he discovers, although nature itself has really produced it. Let us take another example: A person engages with a friend in fair and honourable competition for some public and advantageous employment. He neither wishes nor means ill to his friend, but resolves from the first to treat him with kindness and candour. In the course of the competition, however, he finds himself losing ground, and likely to fail; and then some mysterious influence of nature to which he is subject,\* inspires him with such feelings of envy and

\* The slightest reflection, we should think, might satisfy any one, that all our natural dispositions—including our spontaneous



hatred against his friend, that he can hardly endure him; and what again is chiefly to be attended to,—all men blame him for those very feelings which nature has occasioned, and blame him with even more severity than the person formerly mentioned, although his feelings seem evidently to be a great addition to his misfortune. On what principle is the blame in such cases to be explained?

Some seem willing to allege, that the blame is founded on a mere illusion of the imagination, and that there is no real room for blame at all; that as all our feelings of every description, whether of love or of hatred, whether of candour or of envy, arise from the principles of our constitution and the circumstances in which we are placed,—that is, from the agency of nature,—there is nothing to blame whatsoever. To blame nature for her agency, would be very ridiculous; and to blame man for the agency of nature would be worse; it would be both ridiculous and unjust. This is the explanation of atheism.

desires, affections, and passions,—are merely *physical* principles, and of course operate without the assistance of volition. Can any person suppose that a hungry man desires food because he *chooses* to desire it? or, that a parent loves his children *because* he *chooses* to love them? or, that an angry man is offended because he *chooses* to be offended? Is it not perfectly manifest that all such operations arise from the nature of our constitution, and the circumstances in which we are placed; and that, far from depending on volition, they often take place with great force, in spite of very powerful efforts of volition to check or suppress them?

Strange, however, although it is, there are philosophers, and very ingenious ones too, who contend that all our desires, affections, and passions, are merely modifications of volition.



Another explanation is, that all the *general principles* of human nature are good, and that the bad arise from the particular circumstances in which the general ones are occasionally placed. Even the physical world, it is said, not unfrequently presents such results. The law of gravitation is the source of much general benefit ; but, in particular circumstances, it may occasion considerable mischief. It may raise such tides, for example, in the waters of the ocean, as to overflow the neighbouring country, and produce very extensive devastation.

The great defect of this explanation is, that it totally misses the question at issue. The question is not, Does nature ever occasion any temporary or subordinate evil ? but why, in certain cases, is man blamed for the evil which nature occasions, and blamed even though he himself be a sufferer ? The sea may certainly burst through its barriers, and lay waste adjoining territories ; but do we ever think of blaming the proprietors of these territories ? Do we not rather lament their misfortunes ; and if so inconsiderate as to blame at all, throw blame on the sea ? Why not do the same in other cases, where nature is equally the agent ?

A third explanation is, that all the *original principles* of human nature are good, and that the bad are acquired. We bring with us into the world, it is said, no bad disposition whatsoever. It would be absurd, and almost blasphemous, to allege that a new-born infant, as it comes from the hands of its Maker, can have any tendency to evil. All such tendencies

must be acquired and formed by the scenes and events of after life.

This explanation is similar to the preceding—a mere modification of it, indeed—and equally defective. It totally misses the question to be decided. Admitting that we come into the world with no bad tendency or disposition; yet wherein lies the difference, if nature form us with such constitutions, and place us in such circumstances, that by her own laws—that is, by her own agency—we shall afterwards acquire them? If nature by her own influence ever generate in our breasts any bad tendency or disposition at all, it is evidently nearly the same to the question of moral blame, whether she generate them *after* we are born, or *at the time* we are born, or while sleeping in the womb *before* we are born, or even ordain them from *the ages of eternity*, ere ever a human being was born. The simple question to be examined is, Why is man often blamed for what is incontestably not done by himself, but by the agency of nature? Every other question is altogether misplaced till this one be disposed of.

The question is really one which merits every attention. It bears directly, not only on the important subject of human depravity, but on that of moral obligation in general; and its solution would enable us to surmount not a few of the difficulties of both subjects. Its solution on the principle I have so frequently referred to—the *superintending power of volition*—is one of the most simple in mental philosophy.

1. Should a person construct a machine, and place it in a situation where it will cut, and tear, and bruise

certain articles of his property, it is evident that no blame is attachable anywhere, either to the machine or to himself. To blame the machine would be ridiculous,—it is a mere instrument; and to blame the proprietor would be no less ridiculous. He is only doing what he wills with his own, and may have good reason for his doings.

Suppose, however, that he commits the machine to the care of a servant, with instructions to allow it to operate on certain articles, but to *prevent* it from operating on others; and that the servant neglects his instructions, and allows it to act as before—Would the servant in this case deserve no blame? Could he plead, that as the proprietor constructed the machine himself, and placed it in a situation where, in the mere exercise of its own natural functions, it acted as it did, he—the mere superintendent—is faultless? Would either master, or servant, or spectator, be satisfied with this excuse?

God has made man the superintendent of a machine, which he has constructed and placed in circumstances where, in the mere exercise of its natural functions, it may do much evil. Is man blameless if he neglect its superintendence? Is the circumstance of his allowing it to take its own way the smallest extenuation of his carelessness? Rather, is not this the very circumstance that constitutes his guilt? The machine, indeed, which he has got to superintend, is not distinct from his own person, but a part of it; but who does not see that this only increases his obligation to superintend it aright; for if he would be bound to watch over the movements of an extraneous



implement, much more surely is he bound to watch over the movements of one that is a part of himself. To put the matter in a different light :

2. The lower animals are perfectly blameless in yielding to their natural dispositions. They often discover the most decisive marks of *hatred, resentment, envy, deceit, ferocity, ambition, vanity, pride, rapacity*, and many other bad qualities; and yet they are regarded by every one as utterly undeserving of censure. Suppose, however, that *in addition* to their natural dispositions, they obtained the power of volition—the superintending power which characterises moral agents—and, if their conduct underwent *no change*, many of them, it is obvious, would be the most depraved beings upon earth—incomparably more depraved than the very worst of mankind. But in what would their depravity consist? Merely in yielding to dispositions which nature had given them,—merely in acting according to instincts, which were formerly altogether faultless. Man is a lower animal, with the superintending power of a moral agent superadded; and if *he* act according to the dispositions which nature has given him, is he faultless? To place the matter, if possible, in a still different light :

3. Suppose that a person engaged in some undertaking employs a number of servants, and gives them orders to interpose whenever they see him about to perform certain kinds of actions. Would not the servants be blamable if they neglected to interpose; and yet their employer, even in *knowingly* and *willingly* performing the actions, be entirely faultless? They certainly would, and would be so though their em-

ployer had no other object in view than to make trial of their attention and obedience. Man is a servant appointed to interpose whenever he sees his employer about to perform certain kinds of actions ; and if he neglect to interpose, is he blameless ? Let us take only another example :

4. A person sees a child fall into a pool beside him, and allows it to perish, though, by merely stretching out his hand, he could save its life. The child is drowned by the agency of nature ; but will any one allege that the person is blameless ?

Ten thousand other instances, indeed, might easily be given of the guiltiness of man, where nature is really the agent or cause of what is done, that is, where physical principles produce the effect, and the wrong exercise of our natural dispositions is merely a particular case of such guiltiness. Their exercise is perfectly innocent, in so far as the Author of Nature is concerned, and culpable only so far as man is concerned. In fact, would we lay aside philosophical theories altogether, and take the most ordinary and commonplace view of the subject, we should speedily see that this is the just way of regarding it. Is any thing more common than to hear people blamed for *yielding* to their passions, for *giving way* to their passions, for being *the slaves* of their passions, for *not restraining* their passions, &c. &c. ? But what does this language imply ?—language which we hear every hour. Unquestionably, that people are blamed, not for being the *causes* of their passions, but for *submitting* to their domination ; not for being the authors of their exercise, but for *permitting* their improper sway.



I formerly remarked, that the Almighty, without departing from the holiness of his nature, may place us in circumstances which will certainly be followed by volitions that are sinful. I may now go a step farther, and remark, that the Almighty himself may perform actions and be blameless, and yet man, in respect of these very actions, be sinful. Nothing, indeed, can be more evident, than that actions change their aspects according to the circumstances in which they are performed, and that the same operation may be completely justifiable, when viewed as under the superintendence of the Author of Nature, and yet be completely the opposite, when viewed as under the superintendence of any of his responsible creatures.

The Almighty, who is the author of all our natural dispositions,—for they are mere physical principles, as much so as the principles of material things,—is perfectly blameless in regard to their exercise, and yet man, who is appointed to control them, is often highly criminal. In other words, in the case of the very same operations, God is righteous, and yet man is sinful. The omnipotent Ruler of the Universe may be the author of our doings, in so far as they are *doings*, and yet have no concern with them, in so far as they are *sins*. This has, no doubt, a paradoxical appearance, when stated in the abstract, and by some it has been stated in the most paradoxical form it is capable of assuming; but after all, it comes merely to this,—that when two persons are concerned in the same transaction, the one *performing*, and the other *permitting* it, the former may be innocent, and



the latter guilty,—a proposition so evident, that any illustration would be superfluous.

It is in the highest degree interesting to remark the fearless intrepidity with which the *inspired writers* express themselves respecting our natural dispositions. Ask an ordinary moralist or divine, Who gives fierceness to the lion? and he will answer in a moment, He who made the lion. Ask who gives hardness and obstinacy to the heart of man? and will he answer, He who made man? Put the question, however, to the first inspired writer that ever wrote a page of Scripture, and he will answer it as calmly as the most indifferent matter you could propose. “And the *Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh*,” says Moses, “and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.” “But Sihon, king of Heshbon,” says the same writer, “would not let us pass by him; for the *Lord thy God hardened his spirit*, and made *his heart obstinate*, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.”

I am far from meaning to assert, that these expressions are not in some degree figurative, for to harden and make obstinate, when understood literally, always imply guilt. The expressions, however, occur in a calm historical narrative, and cannot be very highly figurative. Their exact import, if the doctrine I have stated be just, is quite evident. The agency of God was not only so concerned in the conduct of Pharaoh and Sihon, that their acting as they did was the indubitable consequence of the circumstances in which his Providence placed them, but had a still more intimate concern with it. It gave them the very dispositions—

the *spirit* and *heart*—which actuated them, and their guilt consisted in yielding to these dispositions.

Dr Reid, in his *first* Essay on the Active Powers of the Mind, says, “ We judge of the actions and conduct of other men, by the same rule as we judge of our own. In morals, it is self-evident that no man can be the object either of approbation or of blame *for what he did not.*” But this doctrine of Reid must not be so explained as if he meant to assert, that a person cannot deserve either approbation or blame for *not* doing certain actions. The *omission* of duty, for example, is not any thing that a person *does*. From the very import of the term, it is something *which he does not*,—it is something which he *neglects to do*. But it surely is not self-evident, that no man can be blamed for the *omission* of duty? A person, in suffering a child to perish at his side, when by merely stretching out his hand, he could save its life, does nothing. The death of the child is not *his act*; but, beyond all question, he deserves blame on account of it. In reality, were we to admit the doctrine, that no man can deserve blame for *omitting* to perform actions, we should tear up by the roots, at least the one half of morals, and almost the whole of religion, and receive as true what is flatly contradicted by the common sense of every one. Dr Reid, in his *fifth* Essay, where he states what he calls the first principles of morals, expressly mentions, as one of these principles, that “ men may be highly culpable in *omitting* what they ought to have done, as well as in doing what they ought not.”

8. In what degree of strength may the Author of



Nature bestow on us dispositions, the exercise of which is sinful? This question is easily answered. He may bestow them in any degree of strength that does not surpass our power to control them,—that is, the power of volition.\* If they surpass our abilities, all obligation in respect of the amount of the excess ceases. No obligation can ever exceed the power that can be employed to discharge it. From the very nature of the case, the former must be limited by the latter. But up to the full extent of our power, the Almighty may require us, even though we were perfectly innocent, to exert our energies, to exert them in any work he pleases—at least, in any work where the pain upon the whole does not exceed the pleasure,—and to exert them to the very end of our days, without a moment's intermission. These are the plain dictates of reason.

It would be absurd indeed to suppose that God, who is the author of all the powers of his creatures, has not a right, where the labour does exceed the reward, to require their full service, whether that service be, to restrain their natural dispositions, to strengthen their natural dispositions, to regulate their natural dispositions, or to do any other conceivable duty, which his sovereign justice may prescribe. “The first and great commandment” of every moral law to every moral creature, must be to serve God, to serve him “with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the strength, and with all the mind,” and to do so continually, though

\* Volition, it must be observed, in regard to its effects, is merely a natural principle. It is only in regard to motives that it is a moral one. *Moral power* is the degree of preference given by the mind to motives.



the reward of the service never exceed the labour of its performance. If in any case, the Almighty do not require the powers of his creatures to be put fully forth ; if he occasionally give them agreeable employment where the pleasure far surpasses the pain ; or if he sometimes allow them a degree of recreation or higher enjoyments, the whole is to be ascribed not to their *claims of justice*, but to his *own sovereign goodness*.

These, I am aware, are merely elementary truths, acknowledged by every person of common understanding ; but it is of the utmost importance that they be kept steadily in view. The great difficulty is, to make people form precise notions of the elements of religion and morals, and reason from them correctly. Many seem to imagine, that a degree of vagueness on these subjects is inevitable, and that precision is attainable only in the science of physics. But no opinion can be more thoroughly erroneous. The principles of morals admit of being ascertained as accurately as those of any physical subject whatsoever ; and after being ascertained, they are capable of establishing as satisfactory conclusions.—But to return to the subject of our natural dispositions.

When we look to facts, we find the greatest varieties in the dispositions which nature has given us. Even before we have done either “ good or evil,” our dispositions vary exceedingly. Much, no doubt, ought to be ascribed to early education and example ; but no education or example will ever account for all the diversities which our dispositions discover. Many of them are plainly interwoven with the very frame of

our constitution, and inherited from our progenitors. In an average of cases, the offspring of the cruel are incomparably more hardhearted than those of the gentle; and the offspring of the irascible incomparably more unmanageable than those of the calm and considerate. Even among babes and sucklings, we find some more unmanageable than others.

Analogous diversities are to be found among the lower animals. *They*, indeed, are not moral agents, and consequently are not capable of moral evil; but many of their dispositions are nevertheless strikingly similar to those of mankind, and vary in their strength no less considerably. Even those of the same species are far from being exactly alike.

9. Does the strength of a bad disposition diminish our guilt in yielding to its influence? At first sight, we should think that it does. In proportion to the strength of a bad disposition, must be the difficulty of resisting it; and though difficulty may not excuse transgression, we should certainly think that it must afford some extenuation. When we look to the common sentiments of mankind, however, we find that the indulgence of a bad disposition, whether original or acquired, is not extenuated on account of its strength; but, on the contrary, that in proportion to its strength, it is uniformly condemned. Do we extenuate the vindictiveness of a passionate man, because he discovers an inveterate tendency to be resentful? or, the guilt of a thief, because he discovers an inveterate tendency to thieving? or, the intemperance of a drunkard, because he discovers an inveterate propen-



sity to intoxication? or, the avarice of a miser, because he discovers an inveterate propensity to money?\*

A little consideration, however, will clear up the mystery. The difficulty of performing a duty, undoubtedly extenuates in some degree the guilt of non-performance. No person of candour and reflection will say that it does not. But in the case of bad dispositions, this circumstance is far more than counter-balanced by another on the opposite side. If the strength of a bad disposition increases the difficulty of resistance, it still more increases the *obligation to make the resistance*, and consequently our guilt, if the resistance be not made. A person, for example, feels a certain degree of an envious disposition; another feels a greater degree of the same disposition. Is not the latter under greater obligations to restrain his disposition than the former, as it is more pernicious? Beyond all question he is; and, consequently, if he do not restrain it, he is more criminal. People, indeed, often plead the strength of their propensities as an excuse for their transgressions,—as criminals will plead any thing,—but the plea is altogether un-

\* Let it be observed, that by our natural dispositions, I mean every disposition whatever in contradiction to Volition. Our *acquired* dispositions are just as natural—are just as completely subject to *physical* influence—as those that are original. Even dispositions that primarily arise from volition itself, are subject to physical influence. The love of money, for example, arises at first, in consequence of the exercise of volition, but after it is once formed, it may not only operate without this exercise, but even in spite of very strong volitions to the contrary. So completely satisfied, indeed, are the common people, that our acquired dispositions are *natural*, that they often speak of them as forming a *second nature*.



tenable ; and if we would take our views, not from the suggestions of interested guilt, but from the practical convictions of enlightened men of business, we should soon see how the case really stands. Habit, for example, has a powerful influence in increasing our tendency to evil, and consequently the strength of our bad dispositions ; but who ever heard of a judge, who would regard *habit* as an extenuation of guilt, or a counsel or criminal who would urge it on a court, with a view to extenuation ? In the Scotch criminal law, *habit and repute* is viewed as a high aggravation, and many a miserable being has been banished from his country on account of this aggravation, when otherwise he might have continued at home. Whether the law be proper or not, as a rule of criminal justice, it is of no consequence at present to inquire. It is certainly founded on the moral convictions of mankind, and distinctly shows that habit, though it adds strength to our bad dispositions, is not regarded as diminishing, but as aggravating criminality. In fact, in every case where difficulty is accompanied with an increase of obligation, our guilt must be aggravated if we yield to the difficulty.\*

\* It is interesting to remark the very different influence which *difficulty* and *obligation* have on our sentiments concerning things. If while thinking of the demeanour of the profligate, we have our minds chiefly turned to the difficulty they must experience in resisting their propensities, we are exceedingly apt to regard them with feelings of compassion ; whereas, if we have our minds chiefly turned to the obligations they violate, instead of compassion, we regard them with detestation and anger. The first of these influences is usually seized on by licentious writers, to corrupt our moral principles, as, by turning the mind chiefly or exclusive-

10. How comes it to pass that people are often blamed for wanting dispositions which nature has not given them? We blame people for want of gratitude, for want of generosity, for want of piety, &c. although nature may not have made them either grateful, or generous, or pious. Our blame, therefore, does not proceed on the supposition that they are *counteracting good dispositions*, which nature has bestowed; but that they are not exercising dispositions which nature has not bestowed at all. If we witness a person remarkable for ingratitude, uncharitableness, and impiety, our reprobation of his character is not lessened by hearing that he *never* was better; that from his very cradle he has been remarkable for the want of every good disposition, and that it is his very nature to want them. The explanation of this case is now quite evident.

If we be under obligations to *restrain* bad dispositions, and if our obligations to restrain them be in proportion to their degree of criminality, we are manifestly under no less obligations to *acquire* good dispositions, and under obligations to *acquire* them in proportion to their degree of excellence.\* If a person, for example, has no natural disposition to serve his Maker, he is obviously without a disposition of the very highest worth and obligation; and if he do not

ly to the difficulty of overcoming vice, they succeed in conveying the impression that vice is not so much a case of *sin* as of *misfortune*.

\* This, however, it must be observed, implies that we have *power*—I mean *natural* power in contradistinction to what is usually called *moral* power—to acquire good dispositions; and beyond all question we *do* have such power.



bring into the most vigorous and unremitting exercise all the powers he possesses to *acquire* it, he is manifestly guilty. To allege in his *excuse*, that he is naturally without such a disposition, is the most preposterous nonsense. The very circumstance of his being without it, is the reason why he should study to acquire it; and the more completely he is without it, the more diligent should be his study. The same may be said of the *want* or *deficiency* of every disposition without exception which the human heart *should* possess. Our being naturally without it, or our having it in too low a degree, far from excusing our continuing as we are, must inevitably render us guilty if we do not employ all our talents to acquire it, and acquire it in all its perfection.

11. It is maintained by some, that we bring with us into the world the seeds of many bad dispositions—meaning that we bring with us into the world the seeds of many dispositions, the exercise of which is sinful as soon as we are capable of moral agency; for no person, so far as I know, maintains, that as we come into the world, we are guilty of what is called actual sin. This doctrine has been reprobated by many as the very essence of absurdity, and almost of blasphemy. It imputes, they allege, our sins unto God, and not to ourselves, and ascribes depravity to our very nature—to our very constitution as formed by the hands of our Maker. But such allegations prove nothing but the inconsideration of those who advance them. The most ferocious dispositions are blameless while solely under the direction of the Author of Nature, and when placed under *ours*, if we do not restrain them,



it is not he, but we who are to blame. The lower animals, as already remarked, have many natural dispositions similar to ours, and even more ferocious; but do we censure either them or their Maker for their yielding to their dispositions? Had they the faculties of human beings *superadded* to their natural dispositions, would they be equally uncensurable? or, if we, with such faculties *superadded*, act "as natural brute beasts," are we uncensurable? It should never be forgotten, in considering the question of bad natural dispositions, that they are to be seen everywhere. Not only in man, but "in four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." In consequence of them, indeed, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now." The very ground is "cursed" with them; and the only difference between other creatures and man is, that what in other creatures is only natural evil, in man, in consequence of his higher endowments, is moral evil.

Perhaps it may be asked, At what period of life do we become possessed of the dispositions we derive from our progenitors? \* The best answer probably we can give to this question, is to ask in return, At what period of its growth does fruit become possessed of the qualities it derives from the parent tree? The answer to both questions is the same. Fruit becomes possessed, in some measure, of its derivative qualities the moment it becomes a physical being, and it gradually acquires more of them as it advances to ma-

\* See note K.

turity ; and the case is the same with man in reference to his derivative qualities.

If the meaning of the question be, at what period of life do we become possessed of our derivative dispositions as *moral beings* ? the answer is equally evident, and indeed precisely analogous. We become possessed of them in some measure, as moral beings, the moment we become moral agents—that is, capable of moral agency—and gradually acquire more of them as we advance to maturity.\*

The difference between man and other creatures, in reference to such matters, is merely this : The derivative attributes of irrational and insensitive creatures, always continue mere physical attributes, as they themselves always continue mere physical beings ; whereas, such of the physical attributes of man, as are subject to volition, become *moral attributes* (as well as physical ones) the moment he becomes a moral agent. In this there is nothing paradoxical, except perhaps at first view. The lower animals, for example, are possessed of resentment, envy, vanity, pride, hatred, and many other dispositions, which, or the elements of which, they inherit from their parents, and they display them more and more distinctly in their progress to maturity ; but every person knows, that these dispositions *in them* are always purely physical, and cannot possibly be any thing else ; for the lower animals have no *self-government*, and consequently have no power of controlling their natural dispositions. Man also possesses resentment, envy, vanity, pride, hatred,

\* See Note L.



and many other dispositions, which, or the elements of which, he inherits from his parents, and displays them more and more distinctly in his progress to maturity; but when he becomes invested with *self-government*, he has the power of controlling his dispositions; he is blamable, of course, if he do not control them aright, and blamable from the very moment he has the means of controlling them. In *his case*, therefore, they assume a *moral character*; they become *moral* as well as *physical* attributes, and do so from the time he becomes a moral agent. So far the doctrine of derivative dispositions may be shown, by mere reason, to be perfectly well founded, and to involve these two very important particulars, that man is both physically and morally subject to attributes he inherits from his progenitors, *physically* the moment he becomes a *physical* being, and *morally* the moment he becomes a *moral* being, that is, a moral agent.\*

On no subject are the speculations of philosophers more unsatisfactory, than on that of our natural dispositions. That these principles are in themselves mere physical principles, is evident at first sight, and yet that they are liable to moral approbation and disapprobation, is universally acknowledged. The great

\* It may not perhaps be improper to observe, that I am far from pretending to give a full explanation of the doctrine of *Original Sin*, as it has been called. If my opinions be received as correct, *so far as they go*, it is all that I aim at. It would be absurd, indeed, to suppose that mere reason could fully expound a subject which necessarily requires the most attentive examination of the records of revelation. It may be useful, however, to see that reason and revelation, in so far as they respectively come into contact with the subject, entirely coincide.—See Note L.



source of perplexity is the want of precise ideas on the distinction between our *dispositions* and *volitions*, and of the relation of the one to the other. Many seem to imagine, that there is no real distinction between these two parts of our nature at all, but that the former are mere modifications of the latter, or the latter of the former. Edwards, in his Treatise on Religious Affections, avows this opinion most explicitly. "The *will* and the *affections* of the soul," says he, "are not two faculties; *the affections* are not essentially distinct from *the will*, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of the exercise.

"It must be confessed that language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words, in a considerable measure, loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise further than it is *affected*; it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is affected one way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination that are not so commonly called *affections*: in every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclinations, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions; but all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet what are called affections, are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise.

In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: These are not essentially different from those affections of *love* and *hatred*: That liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of *love*: And that disliking and disinclining, if in a great degree, is the very same with *hatred*. In every act of the will *for*, or *towards*, something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *desire*. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *joy* or *delight*. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased; and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of *grief* or *sorrow*."

Every other writer, with whose speculations I am acquainted, also confounds, in one way or other, *volition* with our *natural dispositions*, and thus renders all their speculations on the subject of morals entirely nugatory; for, while the great leading principle of the soul, and its relation to others, are misunderstood, no moral conclusion can be entitled to any confidence.

12. The distinction between the *divine* and the *human agencies*, and the relation of the one to the other, enable us to explain some seeming contrarieties in the style of the *Sacred Writings*, which appear at first sight to be not a little perplexing.



There are obviously two extremes to be avoided in speaking of these agencies,—not to speak of the agency of God, so as to lower the responsibility of man, and not to speak of the agency of man, so as to lower the supremacy of God; and yet the inspired writers, in referring to the divine agency, usually speak of the actions of man as as entirely dependent on God, as if they were performed by God himself; and in referring to human agency, usually speak of the actions of man as as entirely dependent on man, as if they were performed by man himself. Hence, in their many practical counsels, they enjoin us to rely as humbly and as constantly on divine aid, as if we ourselves could *do nothing*; and at the same time to be as diligent and unremitting in the exercise of our talents, as if we ourselves could do *every thing*.

These seeming contrarieties are entitled to the more attention, as they have given rise to two very different systems of Christian Theology,—the one paying too little heed to divine agency, the other too little heed to human, and each claiming the sanction of Scripture exclusively to itself. It is unnecessary to enter into any examination of the distinctive tenets of these two systems. Both have been exhibited in a thousand different forms by their respective abettors; but, in spite of every effort to disguise the truth, the one is founded on nothing but the old doctrine of the *Epicureans* concerning *Chance*, and the other on the old doctrine of the *Stoics* concerning *Fate*. In reality, as I formerly remarked, there is no intelligible medium between these extremes, but the doctrine of *Regular Freedom*; and all that has been written, in modern



times, by the respective advocates of *contingent* and *necessary volition*, whether philosophers or divines, is merely the substance of the old doctrines of the Epicureans and Stoics, accompanied with a number of frivolous and unmeaning distinctions.

To assist in clearing up the difficulties of the subject, let it be remembered, that the words *impossible*, *necessary*, *must*, and others of similar import, always refer, in their proper acceptation, to the *inconsistency* of some action with the being of things. It is *impossible*, we say, for a bird to fly to the moon; if a stone be cast into the air, it will *necessarily* fall to the ground; and if iron be put into the fire, it *must* become hot. In these cases, we mean that it would be *inconsistent* with the being of things to suppose that a bird should fly to the moon; that a stone cast into the air should not fall to the ground, or that iron put into the fire should not become hot—*inconsistent* with their being, to wit, according to the present constitution of nature.

It frequently happens, however, that a different species of *inconsistency* is referred to by these terms,—an inconsistency with the *certainty* of things rather than with the being of things. A person of wealth, for instance, goes to purchase a commodity, and is asked two shillings for an article which is not worth one. He declares that it is *impossible* for him to give such a price, that it is *utterly out of his power* to comply with such an extravagant demand. Does he mean that it would be *inconsistent* with his being to put his hand into his pocket and give away two shillings? Unquestionably not. His meaning is ob-

viously this, or something like this,—that he certainly intends not to give such an unreasonable price for the article, and that it would be *inconsistent* with the *certainty* of this intention to give the sum that is demanded. Let us take another example :

We are assured on good authority, that one of our friends was the whole of yesterday in Edinburgh, and to a person who tells us, that he saw him in the town of Perth, we declare that he *must* have been mistaken ; that it is *absolutely impossible* he could yesterday see our friend in Perth. Do we mean, that it would have been *inconsistent* with the being of our friend to have been in Perth yesterday, or that it would have been *inconsistent* with the being of our informant to have seen him in Perth ? No : What we mean is, that it would be *inconsistent* with the *certainty* of the fact of which we are assured, that our friend was the whole of yesterday in Edinburgh. The following is a different example :

It is *impossible*, we say, for a child possessed of the ordinary faculties, to be brought up in England without speaking English. Do we mean, that the child is deprived of its free agency, and compelled to speak English whether it will or not ? No : Its speaking English we well know is a voluntary action, and not the result of compulsion. Our meaning is, that as it will *certainly* use its free agency according to the circumstances in which it is placed,—taking into account its different dispositions, affections, and passions, &c. it would be *inconsistent* with this *certainty* to suppose it not to speak English. I shall mention only another example :



With one breath we assert, that it is *absolutely impossible* for mankind to be guilty of an action morally wrong which they could not possibly avoid, and with the next, that it is *absolutely impossible* for mankind, in their present state of imperfection, to avoid being guilty of many actions morally wrong. Why such a direct contradiction? The reason is, in the one case we refer to the being of mankind; and our meaning is, that as free agency is necessary to moral wrong, there cannot be an action morally wrong which could not be avoided. In the other case, we refer to the *certainty* of the fact, that mankind will act according to the circumstances in which they are placed,—taking into account their different dispositions, affections, and passions, &c.—and our meaning is, that it would be *inconsistent* with this *certainty* to suppose, that mankind, in their present state of imperfection, should not be guilty of much moral wrong. Exactly as in the case of the child speaking English, we do not refer to any compulsive influence,—to any loss of free agency,—but to the manner in which free agency will *certainly* be employed.\* Let us now attend to the divine and human agencies:

When we speak merely of human agency, it is almost always to the *being* of mankind we refer; and hence, in such cases, we are ready to assert, and to assert with perfect propriety, that man, in his voluntary actions, is free,—that he may act either one way or another,—that he has power either to act or to omit acting,—that the Jews, for instance, had not only the

\* See Note M.



power to put our Saviour to death, but also power to decline putting him to death,—and that mankind have not only power to do something for extending the Christian religion over the world, but also power to decline doing any thing.

When we speak, however, of the divine agency, it is almost always to the *certainty* of things we refer, and hence our language is instantly changed. Let us be told, on adequate authority, that the Almighty has determined on the accomplishment of some particular purpose; and though the free agency of man is actually to be the means of executing that purpose, yet, without a moment's hesitation, we assert—and with as much propriety, too, as in the former case—that it is *impossible* for it not to be executed,—that it *must necessarily* be executed,—that man is *utterly without power* to prevent its execution. The Scriptures have revealed, that Christ was “*delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*,”—delivered into the hands of his enemies, to wit, to be put to death; and certainly the free agency of man was employed in putting him to death. But would any person venture to allege, that it was possible for the free agency of man to frustrate “*the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*?” The Scriptures have also revealed the purpose of the Almighty, that the Christian religion shall ultimately extend over the whole earth, and the free agency of man will certainly be employed as means of its extension. But would any person venture to say, that it is possible for mankind to prevent this purpose of the Almighty from being carried into effect?

In short, although neither the purposes nor the foreknowledge of the Almighty exert any compulsive influence on free agency, yet the moment we refer to these purposes and that foreknowledge, we refer to things which *evince the certainty* of free agency's being employed in a particular way, and it would be inconsistent, of course, with this certainty, to allege that it may not be employed in that way. The purposes and foreknowledge of the Almighty, therefore, far from superseding free agency, as some have imagined, actually acknowledge its existence and exercise.

Perhaps it may be supposed that it would be better to attempt a more correct phraseology on such important subjects, than resort to a style that involves such contrarieties; but every such attempt would assuredly fail, or lead to modes of speaking unfit for general edification. By far the most eligible course is to take common language as we find it, try to understand its exact import, and then employ it with discretion.

Among the friends of regular freedom, there can hardly be any difference of sentiment respecting the divine and human agencies, provided they fully understand their own opinions; but there may be very great differences in the language they make use of. Such of them as are much in the practice of referring to the divine agency, are exceedingly apt, if they be not on their guard, to speak of human beings as if they were mere machines, as if they were mere passive instruments in the hands of their Maker; while such of them, on the other hand, as are much in the practice of referring to human agency, are no less apt,



if they be not on their guard, to speak of the Divine Being as if his *purposes* and *foreknowledge* were *limited*, as if they could be *frustrated*, as if man could do this or that, *in spite* of the divine purposes and foreknowledge.

Even the same individual is apt to fall into these different modes of speaking at different times. Let a person engage in the solemn exercise of *prayer*, and, as his mind is then forcibly directed to the divine agency, he is exceedingly apt, whatever be his professed creed, to speak of God as *foreappointing*, and *foreknowing*, and *indubitably controlling* every thing. But let the same person give an advice to a fellow mortal, and his mind being then forcibly directed to human agency, he is no less apt to speak of mankind as if they could either choose or refuse things, as if they could either act or decline acting, as if they could either comply with an advice, or refuse compliance. I once heard it remarked, that there never in this world was an *Arminian prayer*; and I have likewise heard it remarked,—at least I have heard the substance of the remark,—that there never in this world was a *Calvinistic advice*.

The truth, as already observed, is, that among the enlightened abettors of the doctrine of regular freedom, there can hardly be a difference of opinion respecting the divine and human agencies, although, according as their minds are more forcibly directed to the one or the other, there may be very great differences in their modes of speaking.

The very same remark applies to the important subjects of *Predestination*, *Election*, the influence of Di-



vine Grace, &c. &c. All these subjects have a reference to the divine and human agencies; and among the friends of regular freedom, there is hardly room for a difference of opinion respecting them, though there may be abundance of verbal differences.\*

I may add, that the apparent contradictions respecting divine and human agency, and other related subjects, to be found in the Articles of the Church of England, in the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, and, so far as I know, in all other evangelical creeds and confessions, may be easily reconciled on the principles I have mentioned, and shown to express doctrines at once just and valuable.

The import of the Articles of the Church of England, indeed, on the subjects I refer to, as well as that of the articles of other churches, has given rise to much angry controversy; but the anger is certainly very unnecessary. Let us only suppose, what was unquestionably the fact, that the compilers of the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the English Church designed to maintain the two great principles of belief,—that the agency of God is *so extensive* as to control every thing with indubitable certainty, and that the agency of man is *so free* as to render him responsible for every voluntary action he performs,—and then ask, how they would naturally express themselves? and be-

\* The same may be said of what has been called the Supralapsarian controversy, the Sublapsarian controversy, and many other controversies with which the Christian church has been harassed. The moment the doctrine of the *free* and *regular* exercise of volition is admitted, all such controversies must be considered as decided, or at least reduced to controversies purely verbal.

yond all dispute, if they meant to adhere to the analogy either of the language of Scripture, or of that of common life, they behoved to employ, in substance, the very phraseology they have actually adopted ; and, in reference to the agency of God, speak of God's fore-ordaining, and controlling, and insuring the existence of every thing,—even of every voluntary action ; and, in reference to the agency of man, speak of man's being so free as to be at liberty, in his voluntary actions, either to do or not to do, either to act or to decline acting. There is no other way of speaking on such subjects, adapted to general edification.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than to imagine, as some seem to do, that the compilers of the Articles of the Church of England were hardly any thing but a set of *Necessitarians*, or, as others seem to do, that they were hardly any thing but a set of *Casualists*. It is impossible to read the Articles they have drawn up, without being satisfied that they belonged to neither of these philosophical schools, but, setting at defiance “ the profane and vain babblings ” of both, and their “ oppositions of science, falsely so called,” erected their creed on the dictates of inspiration. The tenets of the *Necessitarians* and of the *Casualists* lead manifestly to the subversion of all morality and all religion, and consequently to the establishment of entire Atheism, and are incompatible with the doctrines of every Christian church.



## SECT. X.

*Sentiments concerning Volition.*

THE authors who have written on the subject of volition are innumerable, but may all be divided into three classes,—those who maintain the doctrine of *Necessity*, those who maintain the doctrine of *Contingence*, and those who maintain the doctrine of *Regular Freedom*.

The first class contend that every thing in nature is *inseparably* connected with that which precedes it; that the freedom of will, of which we seem conscious, is a mere illusion of the understanding; that similar antecedents, in similar circumstances, are *necessarily* followed by similar consequents; and that we can no more avoid having particular volitions, when the antecedent circumstances occur, than the sun can avoid moving in the heavens, or one stone avoid moving when impelled by another.

“When we consider,” says Hume, “how aptly *natural* and *moral* evidence link together, and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow, that they are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. A prisoner, who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of his escape, as well when he considers the obstinacy of the gaoler, as the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and, in all attempts for his freedom, chooses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one, than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the



scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards, as from the operation of the axe and wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas: the refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape; the action of the executioner, the separation of his head and body; bleeding, convulsive motions, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference between them, in passing from one link to another: nor is less certain of the future event, than if it were connected with the objects present to the memory or senses, by a train of causes, cemented together by what we are pleased to call a *physical* necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect upon the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volitions, and actions, or figure and motion. We may change the names of things; but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change."

The doctrine of *Necessity*, whatever be the intentions of its abettors, leads directly to the subversion of all moral distinctions, and consequently to complete atheism.

To avoid these consequences, the abettors of *Contingence* maintain, that our consciousness tells us that we are free in our volitions, that when any thing is presented to us, we feel we can either choose or refuse it, and consequently that our choice, instead of being constrained or necessary, is free and contingent.

"I do many trifling actions," says Dr Reid, "every day, in which, upon the most careful reflection, I am conscious of no motive; and to say that I may be

influenced by a motive of which I am not conscious, is, in the first place, an arbitrary supposition, without any evidence, and then, it is to say, that I may be convinced by an argument which never entered into my thought.

“ Cases frequently occur, in which an end, that is of some importance, may be answered equally well by any one of several different means. In such cases, a man who intends the end, finds not the least difficulty in taking one of these means, though he be firmly persuaded that it has no title to be preferred to any of the others.

“ To say that this is a case that cannot happen, is to contradict the experience of mankind; for surely a man who has occasion to lay out a shilling, or a guinea, may have two hundred that are of equal value, both to the giver and to the receiver, any one of which will answer his purpose equally well. To say, that, if such a case should happen, the man could not execute his purpose, is still more ridiculous, though it have the authority of some of the schoolmen, who determined, that the ass between two equal bundles of hay would stand still till it died of hunger.”

The doctrine of *Contingence* is not expressly stated in this passage, for Reid was not fond of speaking out on this point; but when it is considered, that according to Reid, every thing voluntary must be preceded by an express act of the will, and that the will often acts without any motive, the doctrine is as evidently assumed as if it were stated in so many words.

In the following passage Reid asserts the doctrine of *Contingence* explicitly. “ Whatever is the effect



of active power, must be something that is *contingent*: *contingent existence* is that which dependeth on the power and will of its cause. Opposed to this is necessary existence, which we ascribe to the Supreme Being."

The philosophers who hold the doctrine of *Contingence*, have shown beyond all contradiction, that if man be a necessary agent, there can be no responsibility, no moral distinctions, no sin, no holiness, and consequently no *Divine Being*; but from not attending to the opposite side of the question, they have given their support to a notion in every respect as demoralizing and atheistical as that which they have so successfully overthrown. It is here their antagonists can fairly cope with them. If the irresistible influence of motives, say the Necessitarians, destroy moral worth, their influence in a lower degree must proportionally diminish it; so that to find the real amount of worth in any person, we must deduct motives altogether, and consider him as acting from *accident* and *indifference*. This conclusion the Casualists cannot possibly escape. It follows as necessarily from their principles as any mathematical conclusion from the Axioms or Postulates. But how, rejoin the Necessitarians, can *accident* and *indifference* be the source of moral worth? Is a person the more entitled to commendation the more entirely he acts carelessly and at random? Mankind have always been accustomed to regard the accidental performance of good as deserving no praise, and indifference concerning it as exceedingly blamable; but in this, it seems, they have all been mistaken, for



accident and indifference form the very source, if not the very essence, of all that is excellent.

It is needless to spend time in refuting these absurdities. Beyond all question, if the doctrine of *necessity* lead to the subversion of moral distinctions and the establishment of atheism, the doctrine of *indifference* and *accident* leads no less directly to the same conclusions. Volition is allowed on all hands to be a governing principle, and if volition itself be governed by *contingence*, the whole universe must be under the supreme jurisdiction of *chance*.

The opinions of the Casualists necessarily lead to very erroneous notions concerning some of the doctrines of Scripture, as well as those of the Necessitarians. That the Almighty "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and doth so, "according to the *eternal purpose* which he hath *purposed* in himself," are the doctrines of reason no less than of revelation; but the abettors of the contingent exercise of volition are compelled so to modify and curtail these doctrines as to deprive them of all their simplicity and force. Their *expositions* of many parts of Scripture seem equally exceptionable. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," says the Apostle Paul, "who hath blessed us with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." The Casualists are led to explain these and similar passages in a way to set

aside the electing and predestinating influence of the Almighty altogether, and to sanction a rule of interpretation, which, if generally adopted, would make the holy oracles teach any thing we please.

The abettors of the doctrine of *regular freedom* escape the errors of both the Necessitarians and Casualists. They maintain that man is affected by a great variety of circumstances—such as external objects, internal feelings, passions, habits, and other physical principles; that he is invested with a certain governing or superintending faculty called volition, and that in the employment of this faculty, he is not limited to any particular mode or kind of action, but, without *constraint* or *restriction*, may perform either this, or that action, or no action at all. They farther maintain, that some acts of volition, either in themselves, their concomitants, or consequences, are more easy and agreeable, and others more difficult and disagreeable; that man, being an intelligent as well as a free agent, will pay attention to these differences, and, instead of choosing contingently, choose according to the circumstances in which he is placed.

As consequences of this doctrine they maintain, that according to our acquaintance with the circumstances by which mankind are influenced, we shall be able to *foresee* their mode of acting;\* that if we have

\* It is manifestly all one as to the point of *certainty* whether mankind themselves act according to the circumstances in which they are placed, or be acted upon according to these circumstances. If we know, for example, that a hungry man when placed at table will obey the promptings of his hunger, we know, with just as



power to modify or alter these circumstances, we shall be able to influence them to modify or alter their actions. Of course, that we may influence them to perform certain actions, or certain series of actions, *as indubitably* as if they were physical and necessary instruments in our hands; and that the Almighty, who has all knowledge and all power, can conduct the government of mankind, free and responsible though they are, with as much *precision*, and with as much *certainly*, as the government of the lower animals, or even the government of inanimate matter.

These opinions I cannot but regard as agreeable to the conclusions of a sound philosophy. There are many voluntary actions, indeed, that *seem* to be contingent—such as the instance formerly mentioned, the giving away one of two shillings—but the truth is, actions are denominated *voluntary*, not because there is an express volition for each of them, but merely because they are all under the general superintendence of volition.

I acknowledge, however, that the abettors of the doctrine of Regular Freedom are far from expounding their sentiments with much distinctness. The following statement of them is to be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith. In the ninth chapter of that Confession, which treats of *Free Will*, the compilers state, “that God hath endued the will of man with that *natural liberty*, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute *necessity* of nature determined, to good

much certainty, that he will take food, as we know that if he be wounded by a sword he will feel pain. See Note N.



or evil." And in the third chapter, which treats of the *Divine Purposes*, we find it stated, that "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, *freely* and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the *liberty* or *contingency* of second causes taken away, but rather established." These statements touch very happily on the leading features of the doctrine of Regular Freedom; but they neither give, nor are designed to give, any exposition of it. The word *contingence*, which is introduced, is either used as synonymous with *liberty*, or it refers to that abstract possibility of contingency which I formerly adverted to; for, beyond all question, the compilers of the Westminster Confession had no design to countenance the notion, that the will is ever *contingent* in its *actual exercise*. The whole spirit of their Confession is repugnant to such an opinion.

The Articles of the Church of England are also very attentive to maintain the doctrine of Regular Freedom; at least, they manifestly assume, that man is a *free and responsible creature*; and that *every thing, from the smallest to the greatest, is regulated by the agency of God*. These two principles inevitably lead to the doctrine of Regular Freedom; or rather they are the very pillars on which it rests. The Articles or Confessions of all the other Churches of the Reformation, with which I am acquainted, admit the very same principles—so that the doctrine of Regular Freedom must once have prevailed very generally.

I am utterly unacquainted with any author, however, who has given an intelligible explanation of it. Edwards, in his *Inquiry into the Will*, has refuted the doctrine of *Contingence* with no small energy; and had he been equally successful in regard to *Necessity*, he had left little to his successors, but to extend the principles he has announced. On this side, however, he is completely open to attack, and his utmost efforts to defend himself are utterly unavailing. He tells us, indeed, that by *necessity* he means *a moral necessity*, and brings forward a number of observations to explain this and several other expressions; but in stating the nature of freedom, and the connexion between motives and volition, he adduces not a single idea which every Necessitarian is not prepared to embrace.

"The plain and obvious meaning of the words *freedom* and *liberty*," says he, "in common speech, is *power, opportunity, or advantage, that any one has, to do as he pleases*. Or, in other words, his being free from hinderance or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect, as he wills." And a little farther on he remarks: "But one thing more I would observe, concerning what is vulgarly called *liberty*; namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it, without taking into the meaning of the word, any thing of the cause or original of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive, or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without



a cause ; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his volition or choice how he will, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is fully and perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom."

In his remarks on the connexion between motives and volition, we find the following statement : " With respect to that grand inquiry, *What determines the will?* it would be very tedious and unnecessary at present to enumerate and examine all the various opinions which have been advanced concerning this matter ; nor is it needful that I should enter into a particular disquisition of all points debated in disputes on that question, *Whether the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding?* It is sufficient to my present purpose to say, *It is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest that determines the will.*" In a subsequent passage, he remarks, " I think it must be allowed by all, that every thing that is properly called a motive, excitement, or inducement, to a perceiving willing agent, has some sort and degree of *tendency*, or advantage, to move or excite the will, previous to the effect, or to the act of the will excited. This previous tendency of the motive is what I call *the strength of the motive*. That motive which has a less degree of previous advantage, or tendency to move the will, or that appears less inviting, as it stands in the view of the mind, is what I call *a weaker motive*. On the contrary, that which appears most inviting, and has, by what appears con-



cerning it to the understanding or apprehension, the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite and induce the choice, is what I call *the strongest motive*. And in this sense, I suppose, the will is always determined by the strongest motive."

The doctrine of these passages is, that of pure physical necessity, or fatality. If certain external objects produce certain ideas; these ideas, certain volitions; these volitions, certain outward actions; these outward actions, certain other outward actions, and so on; it is perfectly manifest that the whole process is of the same physical character. The ideas, in the language of Edwards, may be styled motives; and the motives, *moral causes*; the volitions may be styled acts of choice, and the acts of choice *moral effects*; and the connexion between the motives and the volitions may be styled *a moral connexion*; but neither by these denominations nor by any other jugglery of words, can he possibly alter the nature of the case. The process remains exactly as before, and is as purely physical as if it consisted entirely of mere corporeal movements.

The principal terms which Edwards employs in his Inquiry, though such as are commonly used by philosophers, are very ill fitted to express his opinions. The words *liberty, necessity, contingency, indifference*, and even such words as, *possible, impossible, must, can, cannot, unable*, and so on, are all used by philosophers in a technical sense; and Edwards, afraid to deviate from the practice of his predecessors, uses them in the same way. He thus often seems to advance most extravagant paradoxes, when,

had he used a different phraseology, his sentiments had appeared exceedingly reasonable. He qualifies his expressions, indeed, by telling us that by necessity he means a *moral* necessity; by inability, a *moral* inability; by impossibility, a *moral* impossibility, &c.; but such an expedient is utterly inadequate to counteract the effect which the ordinary meaning of the words is calculated to produce. When we are told that an action—whether an act of volition or any other act—is performed by a person from *necessity*; that it was *impossible* for him to avoid it; that he had *not power* to omit it, we no more believe that he deserves blame for his conduct, if these terms be used in their ordinary sense, (and their ordinary sense is most apt to occur to us,) than we believe the person deserves praise who, we are told, acts from *contingence*, does good *accidentally*, or lives *at random*. Philosophers may qualify these expressions as they please, by calling their necessity a *moral* necessity; their contingence a *moral* contingence; but no person in ordinary cases can sufficiently enter into these distinctions. A moral necessity, in the common acceptance of the words, is a contradiction in terms. A moral contingence is precisely the same. Mathematicians may just as well tell us of a circular square, of a straight curve, or an obtuse right angle.

I acknowledge, indeed, that cases occur in which it is requisite to deviate from the ordinary meaning of the terms I have mentioned. According to the ordinary meaning of the word *power*, for example, man is blamable only for what he has power to avoid; but would not that author be thought to advance a very



erroneous doctrine, who should maintain that man, in his present imperfect condition, has power to avoid all manner of iniquity? In such cases, some reasonable qualification ought certainly to be resorted to, and custom itself authorises it. When the common people say that it is not in their power to avoid all manner of iniquity, the word power is not used by them in its ordinary sense, but in a qualified one; and philosophers, when they refer to such a subject, should use it in a qualified sense also. They are not departing from the legitimate employment of the term on such occasions, provided they do not go further than the occasion warrants. But in all ordinary cases, the more general use of the term—and also of its various cor-relatives—should be strictly adhered to.

At present, the doctrine of Regular Freedom appears to be maintained exclusively by a number of pious clergymen, who are more attentive to the writings of inspiration than to those of metaphysicians. I am not aware of a single existing philosopher, of any name, who does not belong either to the school of the Necessitarians, or to that of the Casualists; and great numbers of clergymen of all denominations seem to belong to the same schools—chiefly to the latter. Not a few of those, too, whose general sentiments should rank them with the Biblical party above referred to, discover a strong leaning to one or other of the philosophical schools. In short, the friends of Regular Freedom, or those whose general opinions should lead them to befriend it, are by no means well united among themselves; and, were it not for the aid they derive from Scripture and the common sense of man-



kind, there is reason to fear they might soon be annihilated by the collision of their antagonists.

It is of no small importance, in the present state of philosophy, that correct notions on the subject of volition be generally diffused. In former times, the doctrine of necessity was known but to few, and was thus comparatively innocuous. But at present the case is different. Many are zealously inculcating this doctrine, not from ignorance of its demoralizing and atheistical consequences, but for the very purpose of promoting these consequences. And the advocates of *Contingence*—though beyond all doubt they mean well—present no effectual resistance. The bulk of mankind will never be made to believe, that the very highest principle of the human soul, and that which overlooks and controls all the rest, is nothing but a matter of *accident*; or, if by some strange infatuation they should embrace this opinion, their tendency to immorality and atheism would in no degree be lessened. Instead of believing in the supreme power of *Fate*, they would only believe in the supreme power of *Chance*, and be thus thrown loose from religion and morals in the one case as completely as in the other. The doctrine of Regular Freedom avoids both extremes, and gives the most decided support to all those principles which good men, in every age, have been accustomed to hold dear.

I shall conclude this chapter with again remarking, that, in prosecuting the study of Volition, every effort should be made to distinguish it from the other principles of our nature. A moment's reflection may satisfy any one, that the exercise of a power which ren-

ders man a moral and responsible being, which enables him to superintend every other principle he possesses, which discriminates him from the lower animals, and whose operations are, in the strict and proper sense of the word, *his own*, ought not to be confounded with other functions; and yet philosophers confound them incessantly. They tell us, indeed, in general terms, that the acts of the will are of a *very peculiar nature*; but whenever they come to particulars, we find them representing them as subject to *association*, to *habit*, and various other principles, which are purely physical. While such representations pass for philosophy, the study of the human mind, especially those branches of it which relate to religion and morals, may be given up in despair.

CHAP. IV.

MOTIVE PRINCIPLE.

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SECT. I.

*Preliminary Observations.*

IN the first Chapter I have endeavoured to illustrate the principle by which the mind is affected by the body ; and in this I shall endeavour to illustrate the principle by which the body is affected by the mind. This may be styled the *Motive Principle*,\* as every effect produced by the mind on the body seems to imply some degree of motion : and hardly any principle can be entitled to a more attentive consideration. Before proceeding to examine it, however, I shall state a few of the effects produced on the body, by mere material influence—whether by that of its own constitution, or of things extraneous.

1. Every person at all acquainted with the physiology of the body is aware, that the digestion of the

\* It is usual for physiologists to style the influence of the mind over the body the *Motive Principle*.



food, the secretion and absorption of the chyle, the circulation of the blood, the peristaltic motion of the intestines, the process of assimilation, and many other conservative functions, are carried on by the influence of the body itself, and not by that of the mind, with which it is conjoined, although the mind is no doubt indirectly conducive to them. The body, it must ever be remembered, is not a system of *dead* but of *living* matter; and, like every such system, has the power of performing by its own energies the functions necessary to its preservation. Analogous functions, indeed, are performed by vegetables, which have no mind at all.

2. To the same influence—that of the body itself—are we to ascribe all those physiological operations which are usually styled *sympathetic*. A disorder in the stomach is apt to be accompanied with a disorder in the head, and a disorder in the head with a disorder in the stomach. A disorder in the liver is apt to be accompanied with a disorder on the top of the right shoulder. Too much light admitted into the *eyes* is apt to occasion *sneezing*. The disagreeable effect produced on the *ear* by the filing of a saw, is apt to be accompanied with the disorder styled *setting the teeth on edge*. Tickling the *fauces* with a feather is apt to be accompanied with such an effect on the *stomach* as to occasion vomiting; and tickling almost any other part of the body—even the *soles of the feet*—is apt to be accompanied with such an effect on the muscles of the *face*, as to occasion convulsive laughter. These and many other similar phenomena, are ascribed by physiologists to what they call *sympathy*; and every one knows, that they are occasioned not by the influ-

ence of the mind, but by that of the body itself. Like those, too, formerly mentioned, they are exactly analogous to operations exhibited by vegetables, which are without mind altogether.

Nor does the aptitude of the body to be affected, as now mentioned, depend on the continuity of nerves, or the intimacy of anatomical structure, although these things have probably some influence. An injury in one eye affects the other, though, anatomically speaking, their connexion is very inconsiderable; and a blister on the outside of the body will affect the neighbouring intestines, though their anatomical connexion is equally inconsiderable.\*

3. We must likewise impute to the influence of the body such facts as the following,—that the presence of any mucous substance in the throat, stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to coughing,—that the presence of tartar emetic in the stomach, stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to vomiting,—that the presence of any irritating substance in the nostrils stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to sneezing,—that an increase of light stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to the contraction of the pupil of the eye,—that the contact of the lips of an infant with the nipple of its nurse stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to suction,—that the reception of food into the mouth stimulates to action the neighbouring glands, and occasions an effusion of saliva,—that the contiguity of food with the pharynx

\* See Note O.



stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to deglutition,—and that the contact of atmospheric air with a new-born child stimulates to action the various muscles subservient to respiration.

Some of these operations, indeed, particularly *suction*, *deglutition*, and *respiration*, are materially affected by the agency of the mind; but in the *first instance*, there cannot be a doubt that the agency is purely physiological. What can a new-born infant know of *suction*, *deglutition*, or *respiration*? The vegetable kingdom, too, presents analogous operations, which no one can impute to the agency of mind.

4. We must also refer to the influence of the body a great variety of *morbid* operations,—such as those connected with *fever*, *pleurisy*, *hemiplegia*, &c. &c.

5. The body, too, as was shown in the First Chapter, is capable of exciting a great variety of *feelings*,—such as the sensations of cold, of heat, of sweetness, of sourness, of bitterness, &c. The facts, however, which I particularly refer to at present, are the following:—Some people, in consequence of their bodily temperament, are habitually melancholy; that is, their bodily temperament excites feelings of habitual melancholy. Some people, in consequence of their bodily temperament, are habitually cheerful; that is, their bodily temperament excites feelings of habitual cheerfulness. Some people, in consequence of their bodily temperament, are habitually anxious; that is, their bodily temperament excites feelings of habitual anxiety. Anxiety, as medical men well know, is often a symptom of bodily distemper. Some people, in consequence of their bodily temperament, are ha-



bitually irritable ; some are habitually sedate ; some are habitually mild ; some are habitually ardent ; some are habitually timid ; some are habitually courageous. In short, nothing can be more certain than that, as the external organs of the body excite various sensations of feelings ; its internal temperament,—its physiological condition,—excites various feelings also. To place the matter in a different light.

How frequently do we feel sportive, without any thing perceptibly joyous to have excited our mirth ! And how frequently dull, without any thing perceptibly adverse to have excited our gloominess ! How often do those whose respiration is vitiated experience, while in bed, the most corroding anxiousness ; and yet find, that they no sooner arise than it entirely forsakes them ! Some people, while under the influence of spiritous liquor, are unusually quarrelsome, while others are unusually good-humoured. An hungry man, according to the proverb, is an angry man ; and it certainly often happens, that a person fasting is more irritable than after a full meal. Young children, while fasting, are almost always fretful. Children of the same parents have frequently a family likeness in their outward aspect ; and the likeness is no less evident in their interior temperament. In an average of cases,—for particular instances are not to be regarded,—the children of the ardent are incomparably more warm-hearted than those of the dull and phlegmatic ; and the children of the mild, incomparably more gentle than those of the fierce and unrelenting. In our progress to maturity, the condition of the body undergoes some important alterations ; and alterations no

less important take place in our interior feelings. Emotions of which a child is unconscious gradually make their appearance, and exert the most extensive influence on the whole of our future lives.

6. The following phenomena may also be mentioned as produced by the body. Certain sounds are apt to excite feelings of cheerfulness, others feelings of sadness, others feelings of terror, &c. ; and certain colours and forms, particularly when accompanied with motion, are apt to do the same. A mirthful, a gloomy, or an angry countenance, is apt to affect every one.

Some, I am aware, are disposed to ascribe these phenomena to the influence of the mind, and there cannot be a doubt that as we *grow up*, the mind acquires an influence over them the most effective. In the *first instance*, however, they seem plainly to arise from the influence of the body, for they are observable in children before the mind has obtained the requisite information. Nor are they more remarkable, indeed, than many other phenomena which every one ascribes to bodily influence.

I may here remark, that though physiology does not form a branch of metaphysical study, but belongs to that of *living matter*, yet it is highly requisite that the metaphysician have some acquaintance with its principles. Physiologists have often been accused of applying the appropriate doctrines of their science to phenomena which ought to be ascribed to the influence of the mind, and there is certainly some room for the accusation ; but there is hardly less room for accusing metaphysicians of applying the appropriate doctrines of *their* science to phenomena which ought to be ascri-



bed to the influence of the body. It is quite accordant indeed with the natural bias of the mind, that each should push their principles beyond their fair limits.

Both parties accordingly have contributed to error. Physiologists have alleged that if the body may give rise to the feelings already mentioned,—such as melancholy, cheerfulness, irritation, anxiety, &c. &c.—it seems reasonable to conclude that man may be *body altogether*, and consequently that the mind may be a *mere modification of matter*; and metaphysicians, to escape from this conclusion, have rashly denied the facts themselves, and thus prejudiced every person of correct information against the opposite doctrine. Accordingly, three-fourths, perhaps nine-tenths, of the practitioners of medicine, who are led by their profession to attend to the functions of the body, are unfriendly to the doctrine of the mind's immateriality.

The error of physiologists by no means proceeds from misapprehension of *facts*, but from inaccuracy of *reasoning*. It does not follow that because the body gives rise to feelings in the mind, the mind is therefore a modification of body, any more than it follows, that because feelings in the mind give rise to changes in the body, the body is therefore a modification of mind. Would we listen to the man who should contend that because *thought* often gives rise to *motion*, motion must therefore be a mere modification of thought; and that when a body is rapidly *moving*, it is only engaged in a rapid process of *thinking*? The absurdity of this argument would strike every one; but it is not more absurd than that em-



ployed on the other side by physiologists. Both arguments, indeed, are utterly unworthy of attention.

Would physiologists and metaphysicians reason candidly, it would speedily appear that their studies are perfectly harmonious, and decidedly favourable to the doctrine of the immateriality of mind ; for facts innumerable, *physiological* as well as *metaphysical*, go to prove, that the mind and the body, though closely connected, are quite distinct and dissimilar systems ; and that though they act and react on each other continually, yet each has its appropriate functions and laws.

My object, however, in this chapter, is not to examine the influence of the body on the mind, but the influence of the mind on the body ; and to this very interesting subject of inquiry I shall now therefore proceed.

Many of the effects produced by the mind on the body,—such as the motion of the head, of the hands, and of the feet,—may be styled *direct effects* : others, being accessory to these,—such as the motion of the nerves, of the muscles, and of the tendons,—may be styled *accessory effects* ; and others, being of a more remote kind,—such as the red complexion occasioned by anger, the dull complexion occasioned by grief, the pale complexion occasioned by fear,—may be styled *remote effects*. It is only with the *direct effects* the philosophy of the mind is concerned. The accessory and remote ones belong to the physiology of the body, and must be left to the students of that science. The law, I imagine, according to which the *direct effects* are produced, is the following :—

*Every direct effect produced by the Mind on the body, is occasioned by an idea of that effect.* This law may be styled *The Law of Congruity*, as the ideas and the effects agree with one another; and in explanation of it, let the following observations be attended to:—

1. The ideas must continue so long in the mind as to allow time for the effects to take place. Ideas often pass through the mind with inconceivable rapidity, but such ideas are too evanescent to produce any perceptible effect on the body. 2. The ideas must not be counteracted by opposite ones. We may form an idea, for instance, of moving some part of our body, and yet mean that it shall actually remain at rest; but in such circumstances, there is evidently an idea of its remaining at rest, as well as of its moving, and no motion therefore can be expected to take place,—the one idea counteracting the other. 3. The ideas must embrace all the essential circumstances of the effect. If we form an idea of moving some part of our body, but do not fix on the particular part, the particular direction of the motion, the particular time it is to be performed, &c., we plainly omit circumstances essential to the result, and cannot therefore expect any motion to ensue.

Perhaps, however, the best account that can be given of the ideas I refer to, is to say, that though *fainter in degree*, they are *similar in kind*, to those which are produced by the *Sensitive Principle*. Thus, motion, in any sensitive part of the body, is accompanied with a corresponding idea in the mind; and a *similar idea* in the mind, I apprehend, is accom-



panied with a corresponding motion in the body,—the idea in the latter case being the exciting cause of the motion, as the motion in the former case is the exciting cause of the idea. Could this doctrine be established, the mode in which the mind and the body *act* and *react* on each other, would of course be discovered, and a degree of light thrown on the science of human nature, of a character the most valuable. It may be established, I imagine, by facts innumerable. Let us begin with those which imply the exercise of Volition, particularly the phenomena of *voluntary motion*.

## SECT. II.

### *Voluntary Effects.*

One striking phenomenon exhibited by voluntary motion, is, that repetition increases the facility of its performance, till at last it seems to escape the influence of volition altogether. “Suppose,” says Hartley, “that a person, who has a perfectly voluntary command over his fingers, begins to play on the harpsichord. The first step is to move his fingers from key to key, with a slow motion, looking at the notes, and exerting an express act of volition in every motion. But by degrees the motions cling to one another, and to the impressions of the notes, in the way of association, so often mentioned; the acts of volition growing less and less express all the time, till at last they become evanescent and imperceptible. For an expert performer will play from notes or ideas laid up in the memory, and at the same time carry on a quite



different train of thoughts in his mind, or even hold a conversation with another. Whence we may conclude, that there is no intervention of the idea or state of mind called will."

Scarcely any thing can be more simple than the explanation of these facts by the *law of Congruity*. When the learner begins to play on the harpsichord, the ideas of the notes do not readily occur to him; and he has to pause at every step, till, by the exercise of attention, he summon them up, or by the exercise of vision, if they be marked in a book before him. The same thing happens with the ideas of the movements which are necessary to produce the notes; and on both accounts, therefore, he must experience considerable difficulty, and proceed very slowly. By means of repetition, however, the principle of association enables the ideas to suggest one another more readily, and the learner of course can proceed with more facility; and by continuing the repetition, the facility is augmented, till at last the ideas are suggested, and the notes produced, without any effort of attention at all.

The process, in short, in as far as the mind is concerned, is precisely analogous to that of committing a number of ideas to memory,—an operation in which, as every one knows, though considerable efforts of attention may be requisite at first, yet, by frequent repetition, the ideas acquire power to suggest each other, without any effort whatever. The only difference between the two cases, is, that in committing a number of ideas to memory, the ideas are not connected with bodily motion, and consequently no motion takes

place; whereas, in learning to play on the harpsichord, many of the ideas are so connected, and of course produce motion.

Stewart says, "that he cannot help thinking it more philosophical to suppose that those actions which are originally voluntary, always continue so, [obviously meaning, that they continue to have an express volition for each of them,] although, in the case of operations which are become habitual, in consequence of long-continued practice, we may not be able to recollect every different volition." Did the will exert a direct influence over our voluntary motions, I should be very much disposed to adopt the same opinion; but if its influence be only indirect—if it operate only through the medium of ideas—the law of association, in the case of actions repeatedly performed, must infallibly supersede the necessity of volition, and enable us to perform them without its assistance.

In the case now considered, we have a very good instance of a fact which has already been referred to,—that actions are styled voluntary, not because each has an express volition to itself, but because they are under the general superintendence of volition, and may be stopped or continued as we think proper.

Another case exactly analogous to the preceding, and to be explained in the same way, is afforded by children when learning to walk. The difficulty they experience on such occasions, is plainly not altogether owing to the weakness of their limbs to support their bodies, and enable them to perform the requisite movements, but to the circumstance, that the ideas which are necessary for balancing and moving their bodies,



do not readily present themselves, and can only be learned after numerous trials and repetitions. In learning to speak, a similar difficulty is experienced, which is removed in the same way.

The difficulty which children experience in pronouncing some words, is commonly diminished by their seeing the lips of another person while pronouncing them; and teachers not unfrequently resort to this expedient for their assistance. The reason is, the sight of the proper motions in another, aids the suggestion of the ideas of similar motions in themselves, and enables them, of course, to perform these motions, and consequently to pronounce the words with more facility. This will more clearly appear, when we come to consider the case of imitative motions.

But repetition not only increases the facility of performing voluntary motions, it also begets a *prone-ness* to perform them. "I conceive it to be a part of our constitution," says Dr Reid, "that what we have been accustomed to do, we acquire not only a facility, but a proneness to do on like occasions, so that it requires a positive will or effort to forbear it, but to do it, requires often no will at all." The following is evidently the explanation of this curious fact.

When we have been accustomed to any action, the influence of association, on like occasions, must be apt to make the idea of it again occur, and consequently make us apt or prone to perform the action. The more we have been accustomed to the action, the influence of association, on like occasions, must be the more apt to make the idea of it again occur, and consequently to make us the more apt or prone to per-



form the action ; and if the custom has been long continued, the influence of association, on like occasions, may be apt to excite the idea of it, not only without any effort of volition at all, but in spite of very considerable efforts to the contrary ; and accordingly, we may be apt to perform the action in spite of considerable efforts to the contrary.

In a similar way are we to explain the fact, which has often been noticed—that all our active principles are strengthened by exercise. “ An old physician,” says Mr Stewart, “ has acquired a more confirmed habit of assisting the sick and helpless, than a younger practitioner, and would offer greater violence to his nature, if he should withhold from them any relief that he has in his power to bestow.” The reason obviously is, that in the mind of an old physician, the idea of distress is more intimately associated with ideas of the actions, which are necessary to administer relief, than in that of a young practitioner ; and of course, when cases of distress occur, he is more prone to perform such actions, and must break through a more confirmed association in declining them.

The origin and increase of all our active habits, whether bodily or mental, are to be explained in the same manner. The whole of them are founded on association ; and although their exercise may require at first very considerable efforts of attention, yet association must sooner or later render attention unnecessary, and beget a proneness to their exertion.

This proneness to perform actions to which we have been accustomed, is very incompatible with the supposition, that volition has any direct influence over

our bodily motions ; for, on such a supposition, the will must interpose between the ideas and the motions, and being itself uncontrollable by the influence of association, must occasion *a break*, so to speak, between them, and render the most intimate association as incapable of producing any practical propensity as the most loose.

The truth, as formerly remarked, is, that in performing voluntary operations there is no necessity for an act of the will to every particular movement ; for, if any part of the operation be at all familiar, the influence of association must spontaneously supply ideas of it, and enable us to proceed without farther trouble. It is only when the requisite ideas do not occur in proper order, or do not occur so readily as the operation requires, that volition must be resorted to ; and it is in consequence of this circumstance, and our being able to stop or continue as we please, that operations are styled voluntary. The case is perfectly analogous to our going over a train of ideas imperfectly committed to memory. In such a case, the repetition may be styled voluntary, as the will exercises a superintending influence, and enables us to stop or proceed as we think proper ; and yet unquestionably, many of the ideas occur by the spontaneous influence of association, and the interference of volition is employed only when we find ourselves wandering from the subject, or the ideas not occurring with sufficient readiness.

The account now given of our voluntary motions, exhibits this branch of human nature in a much more simple light than is usually done. Instead of requiring volition both for our ideas and voluntary motions, it requires volition for our ideas alone, and subjects our



voluntary motions to the influence of volition, through the medium of our ideas. It also evinces a much more close connexion between the principles of the mind and voluntary motion than is usually done. Our voluntary motions are commonly exhibited by philosophers in a very insulated light. Except volition, there is hardly any mental operation on which they are represented as depending, whereas the above account exhibits them as no less dependent on association; and by bringing into view their connexion with this latter principle, we are enabled to account for a variety of interesting phenomena, which have hitherto been regarded as utterly inexplicable.

The arguments in favour of the common doctrine, however, are considerably specious, and merit some attention.—1. Bodily motions, it may be said, take place so suddenly after volition, that no idea can have time to come between them. But this argument may be easily removed. The operations of the mind take place on innumerable occasions with such prodigious rapidity, that no argument, derived from any supposed want of time, can be of much weight. Besides, the doctrine I have proposed, does not require that an idea come *between* the volition and the motion; it merely requires, that the idea immediately precede the motion. And even the common doctrine must admit this circumstance; for though it ascribes the motion to volition, yet it allows there must be some idea also, and that so long as the motion continues, the idea must likewise continue; and consequently, that the volition can no more come between the idea and the motion, than the idea between the volition and the motion.



2. We have often ideas of bodily motions, it may be said, when no motion whatever takes place. This objection may be as easily answered as the foregoing. When we form an idea of any particular motion, and wish it not to take place, we must have some idea of its not taking place, that is, we must have an idea of the body's remaining at rest, as well as of its moving; and according to the law of Congruity, the one of these ideas must counteract the other, and, of course, prevent the motion from taking place: or the motion may be prevented by forming only a relative instead of a positive idea; or, by forming an idea without those specialities which the circumstances require; or by quickly turning our minds to some other idea, before the motion has time to be effected. In all our investigations respecting the human mind, we must make allowance for the prodigious velocity with which its operations may be performed; and for the fact, that it is often impossible to remark these operations, even when every one must acknowledge their existence. In short, it is not *every kind* of idea that enables the law of Congruity to produce motion, but one of a particular kind.

3. No act of volition, it may be said, can be employed about any bodily motion *before* we have some idea of it; and hence, if volition be employed about the motion at all, it cannot precede, but must succeed the idea. That volition cannot be employed about any bodily motion *before* we have some idea of it, is evident; but it is no less evident, that it can as little be employed about it *after* the idea has vanished. We can no more will any thing *after* the idea of it

has gone out of the mind, than before it enters. The idea of every motion, therefore, and the volition concerning it—when there is any volition at all—must exist simultaneously; and in judging of the principle on which the motion depends, we may either refer it to the idea, or to the volition, or to both, as best suits the phenomena. Besides, though some idea of every motion must exist before we have any volition concerning it, it by no means follows that the idea must be of that kind, as to fulfil the conditions which the law of Congruity demands. On the contrary, the volition may be employed for the very purpose of procuring such an idea.

But not only is the law of Congruity applicable to voluntary *motion*; it is no less applicable to voluntary *rest*, or cessation from motion. I stretch out my hand, for instance, and detain it in a position, where, without the voluntary influence of my mind, it would not remain for a moment. On another occasion, I stop my hand, while moving with some velocity, though without the voluntary influence of my mind the motion would continue. That in these, and all such cases, the mind acts according to the law of Congruity, may be evinced by the very same observations—*mutatis mutandis*—as have been made respecting motion.

### SECT. III.

#### *Imitative Effects.*

ANOTHER class of bodily motions, which depend upon the mind, are primarily occasioned by what we observe in others—such as all those motions which



are usually styled *imitative*. Our proneness to imitate what we see in others, is attended with some of the most curious phenomena which human nature presents, and the law of Congruity accounts for them completely.

Imitation is obviously founded on *similarity*; for when we imitate another, we merely do something *similar* to what we see him doing. Now, similar ideas, as was shown under the head of Association, have always a tendency to suggest each other, and must consequently lead to imitation. When we obtain, for example, the idea of any motion in others, it must be apt to suggest the idea of a similar motion in ourselves; and therefore, if the law of Congruity be just, it must be apt to make us perform the motion ourselves. The accuracy of this reasoning may be easily seen, by comparing its results with the actual phenomena.

1. The more completely the idea of any motion in others occupies our minds, the more apt must association be to make it suggest the idea of a similar motion in ourselves, and consequently the more apt must we be to perform such a motion. No conclusion can be more agreeable to experience. When we pay little or no heed to the actions of others, our tendency to imitate them is very imperfect; but when our feelings are roused, and our minds much affected, we are prone to keep pace with them in every thing they do.

2. The more frequently the idea of any action in others has suggested the idea of a similar action in ourselves, the more apt must it be again to suggest it, and consequently the more apt must we be again to



perform the action. This conclusion also is perfectly agreeable to experience. A person who has lived long with others, is far more apt to imitate them,—their gait, for instance, and gestures, and manner of behaviour,—than one who has lived with them very little.

3. The more nearly one idea resembles another, the more apt must it be to suggest it; and hence our ideas of motion in others should be apt to suggest ideas of those motions in ourselves which most nearly resemble them, and consequently lead us to perform such motions. This conclusion, likewise, is agreeable to experience. A motion of the head is imitated by a similar motion of the head, a motion of the hand by a similar motion of the hand, a motion of the eye by a similar motion of the eye, and so on.

In imitating others, however, we are commonly sensible of the futility of our conduct; for, to move our head, our hands, or our eyes, because others, in different circumstances, may find it convenient to move theirs, cannot but strike us as exceedingly useless: and hence it happens, that we soon acquire the habit of checking such motions, and give way to it only when deeply interested, or thrown off our guard.

4. The minds of children are far more susceptible of lively ideas and feelings, than those of persons of mature age, and have not acquired those habits which check their tendency to imitation. It should consequently happen, that children are more prone to imitation than persons grown up: and every person knows that they actually are so;—in fact, that they are prone to imitate every thing.

A variety of other conclusions relating to imitation

might easily be mentioned, which equally well agree with experience. When we see a person in danger of falling, and wish him to recover himself, we must have some idea of the motion necessary to his recovering himself. This idea must have a tendency to excite the idea of ourselves performing a similar motion; and hence we are very apt, in reality, to perform a similar motion, and to move our body as we think he should move his. Again, when we see a stroke aimed at another, and wish him to repel it, we must have some idea of the movement or attitude necessary to his repelling it. This has a tendency to excite the idea of ourselves assuming a similar attitude; and hence we are very apt, in reality, to assume a similar attitude. If, instead of *repelling* the stroke, we wish him to *avoid* it, we must have some idea of the motion necessary to his avoiding it; and hence we are very apt to move or incline our body, as if we ourselves were avoiding it. If our mind be more forcibly turned to the stroke, than to the person against whom it is aimed, we naturally wish the stroke to avoid the person, and take a different direction. We have consequently some idea of the direction which we wish it to take; and hence we incline or twist our body in a similar direction. In fine, if our mind be sometimes more forcibly directed to the stroke, and sometimes to the person, we must have ideas of several very different motions; and hence, in such a case, the motions or contortions of our body are exceedingly multifarious.

In these instances, too, we have a striking proof of the tendency of an idea to suggest another more exactly similar to itself in preference to one that is less



similar. When we wish a person who is *facing us* to avoid a stroke that is aimed at him from his *right*, we must have some idea of his moving or inclining his body to his *left*. Now there are two ways in which we may imitate this motion. We may either move *our* body to our *left*, that is, considering our position with regard to him, in the opposite direction to that which we think he should take; or we may move our body to our *right*, that is in the same direction we think he should take. Every one, however, must see that our moving in the same direction is the more *prominent* circumstance, and that which renders the two actions most nearly alike: and accordingly it will be found, that, in most cases, we actually move in the same direction. The same thing happens when we wish a person to avoid a fall. We move or twist our body in the *same direction* we think he should move his, although we may incline to our *right* when we think he should incline to his *left*, or incline to our *left* when we think he should incline to his *right*. This is well exemplified in the case of the multitude while gazing on a rope-dancer. They are ever prone to writhe and twist their bodies in the same way, as, to prevent his falling, they think he should twist his. Another exemplification of the same general truth is afforded by the imitative motions of our eyes. If a person who is facing us look to his *right*, it is ten to one that we look to our *left*; that is, in the same direction, though to a different side of our body: and if he look to his *left*, it is ten to one that we look to our *right*. In all these instances, the exact conformity of the phenomena to the law of Congruity, con-



nected as it is with the other principles of our nature, is abundantly evident, and cannot fail to confirm our belief of its truth and extensive application.

It was formerly remarked, that when children are puzzled in pronouncing a word, they are usually much assisted by observing the lips of another person while pronouncing it; and the reason assigned was, that the sight of the proper motions in another aids the suggestion of ideas of similar motions in themselves. That this is the true reason, must now, I imagine, be quite manifest; and it is an exact consequence of the law I am considering.

Nor is it the motions of our *fellow men* only that the law of Congruity leads us to imitate. In some cases, it is hardly less effective in making us imitate those of *inanimate objects*. A boy, in pitching a stone at a mark, is usually much interested in the success of his project, and if he sees it going wrong, he is almost sure to incline or twist his body in the direction he thinks it should take in order to come right. It is unnecessary, however, to multiply examples. The least reflection will supply us with any number of them.

I may here remark, that in the above, and various other cases, it is the part of the body which happens for the moment to be *most in the view of the mind* that is apt to perform the imitative movements.

Another class of imitative effects is stated in the following passage from Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. "Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body complain, that in looking on the sores and ulcers which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in

the corresponding part of their own bodies. The horror which they conceive, at the misery of these wretches, affects that particular part in themselves, more than any other, because that horror arises from conceiving what they themselves would suffer, if they really were the wretches whom they are looking upon, and if that particular part in themselves were actually affected in the same miserable manner. The very force of this conception is, in their feeble frames, sufficient to produce that itching or uneasy sensation complained of. Men of the most robust make observe, that in looking upon sore eyes, they often feel a very sensible soreness in their own, which proceeds from the same reason; that organ being in the strongest man more delicate than any other part of the body in the weakest."

If the law of Congruity be admitted, the process by which the effect here mentioned is produced is easily explained. The perception of any soreness in the bodies of others, has a tendency, according to the influence of similarity, to suggest the idea of a similar soreness in the corresponding parts of our own; and this idea, according to the law of Congruity, has a tendency actually to produce the soreness. Smith's explanation is vague in the extreme, and his notion, that we conceive ourselves to be in the situation of the sufferers, is unworthy of his genius. There seems evidently to be no such conception in the case, and although there were, the phenomena would be nearly as mysterious as ever; for how, it may be asked, does such a conception arise, and how does the effect result from it? Smith does not even attempt to answer



these questions, but seems to imagine, that merely to state the facts themselves is explanation enough.

I may mention the following facts as somewhat analogous to the preceding. It commonly happens, that while walking alone for our recreation, we feel sooner fatigued than when walking on business, or in company with a friend. The reason evidently is, that in the former case, the slightest feeling of uneasiness attracts our notice, and by thinking on it we increase the tendency of the body to augment it; whereas, in the latter case, our minds are so occupied with the object of our journey, or the subjects of our conversation, that unless our fatigue be very considerable, we never think of it at all. Even the common people would give this explanation, and tell us that they felt no fatigue on such an occasion, as they never *thought* of fatigue. In reality, it is quite an established maxim with the common people, that by *thinking* on our sensations, we increase the tendency of the body to produce them—whether they be sensations arising from fatigue, from hunger, from thirst, or from any other cause. I may add, that nothing is better known than that, by merely thinking on certain sensations of taste, we can even make the *saliva* flow into our mouths, as if we were actually enjoying the gratifications of which we are thinking.\*

\* It follows from the doctrine in the text, that the vividness of ideas arising from the mind may often be promoted by the influence of the body. If we form, for example, a certain idea of taste, that idea will have a tendency to make the body excite a degree of the taste, and consequently the idea must be considerably brightened: and so in other cases.

In point of fact, the vividness of ideas arising from the mind



Even in the case of those effects which are usually deemed the most mysterious, the law of Congruity seems manifestly to be the regulating principle. In those singular phenomena which sometimes occur in medical practice, and which in general are vaguely imputed to the imagination, there is evidently a firm idea on the part of the patient, that the effect will take place. "It is impossible," says Sir Gilbert Blane in his *Elements of Medical Logick*, "to set bounds to the power of self-delusion, in creating sensations excited without the presence or operation of any actual corporeal impression. I have been assured by those who have been in circumstances of exposure to the infection of the plague, and in momentary dread of catching it, that they have felt acute pains in the groins and arm-pits, these being the parts known to be most prominently affected in that epidemic. More familiar, though less aggravated examples of this, occur among those subject to hypochondria. Enthusiasm, mania, dreaming, night-mares, and delirium, give rise to all the diversified forms and gradations of the same species of delusion." Such untoward facts, though teasing enough to the physician of the body, are highly satisfactory to the philosopher of

seems often to be promoted by the influence of the body. Some people's imaginations, for example, are more vivid in the morning than in the evening; and when moderately hungry, than after a full meal. Some people's imaginations are never more vivid than when they are half intoxicated; and some people have more vivid imaginations than others, obviously on account of the constitution they inherit from their ancestors. It was long the doctrine of philosophers, that the imagination depends much on the influence of the body.

mind, as they confirm, by a very singular and unexpected kind of evidence, the deductions of his science, and prove beyond all dispute, that the effects produced by the mind on the body, are produced by certain ideas of them. I may also remark, that medical practitioners are usually very attentive to impress on the minds of their patients the idea of their recovery, convinced that such an idea is in the highest degree useful for realising its own anticipations.

Our tendency to imitate others, is commonly ascribed by philosophers to a principle of imitation ; but this is evidently not an explanation, but merely a designation under which the phenomena may be classed. If considered as an explanation, it is utterly nugatory, and exactly analogous to those proposed by some ancient philosophers, who accounted for motion by means of a motive principle ; for digestion, by means of a digestive principle, and so on.

Others seem inclined to impute the phenomena to the influence of sympathy, and there cannot be a doubt that it is possible so to explain sympathy, as to enable it to account for them ; but such an explanation must make sympathy comprehend both the law of Congruity and the influence of similarity ; and, of course, must be substantially the same with the foregoing explanation, under a different form. Some seem to mean by sympathy, not merely our entering into the views and feelings of others, but a kind of aptitude in our *bodies* to conform to those of others ; but if this be any thing different from what is usually called imitation, it is something so vague and mystical, that I am utterly unable to comprehend it.



## SECT. IV.

*Interior Effects—Emotions.*

The mind, as every one knows, not only exerts a powerful influence on the exterior parts of the body, but likewise on the interior. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive of the mind, but as somehow or other situated *within* the body, and consequently as exerting its influence from *within*.

The interior of the *breast* seems to be particularly liable to the influence of the mind. In consequence of the process of respiration, and other causes, this part of the body is kept almost continually in our view; and it is the only part which is so, for in no other is there any sensible operation continually going on; and it is so exceedingly sensitive as to be affected by the slightest impression that is made on it.\*

Accordingly, in almost every mental exercise, some feelings are experienced in this quarter. In the case of anger, for example, they are often experienced with great liveliness; likewise in the case of joy, sorrow, hatred, attachment, aversion, hope, fear, &c. &c. Even in the case of mere intellectual exercises, they are often very sensibly experienced.

Are *such feelings* any thing else than those which usually go under the name of *emotions*? In the case of anger, for instance, are *the feelings* resulting from the mind's producing some movement or agitation *in the interior of the breast*, any thing else than the *emotion* of anger? In the case of joy, are *the feelings*

\* See Note P.



resulting from the mind's producing some movement or agitation *in the interior of the breast*, any thing else than the *emotion* of joy? And so in other cases.\*

Could these questions be answered in the affirmative, we should be enabled to account for a variety of phenomena, which have hitherto been deemed completely inexplicable; and the following considerations seem to place the affirmative beyond all reasonable controversy.

1. It is allowed by every one, that the mind, in the exercise of its functions, *does* produce some movement on the body, particularly about the interior of the breast, and that very sensible feelings result from this movement. No person doubts, that in the case of anger, of joy, of sorrow, &c. the mind *affects the body*, and thus occasions very perceptible *feelings*. The main facts of the case, therefore, are admitted,—the influence of the mind to produce some interior bodily movement, and the experience of certain *consequent feelings*. But what evidence is there for another set of feelings arising from a different source? For these last there is no evidence whatever, and the belief of their existence, therefore, is perfectly gratuitous.

2. It is quite agreeable to the common sentiments

\* I readily admit, that mental associations may afford *conceptions* of emotions, and that these conceptions, when positive, have some *resemblance* to their prototypes, just as *conceptions* of sensations of colour, or sound, or taste, or smell, when positive, have some *resemblance* to their prototypes; but in neither case do such conceptions receive the name of *feelings*. We do not call the *conception* of a colour, of a sound, of a taste, or of a smell, a feeling; and neither do we call the mere *conception* of an emotion a *feeling*.

of mankind, to believe that our emotions arise *immediately* from some movement or agitation of the body about the interior of the breast. When the common people speak of their emotions, they do not speak of them as mere *still* and *quiescent* feelings, like their ordinary sensations, but in terms expressive of some degree of *action*. They speak of *lively* emotions, of *thrilling* emotions, of *tremulous* emotions, of the *movements* of emotions: the very word *emotion* is expressive of some *movement* or *action*. Every one knows, too, that while under the influence of any strong emotion we always feel considerably *agitated*, and that the agitation seems to proceed from something about the interior of the *breast*. When our thoughts suddenly touch on any disagreeable incident, a very smart twinge of vexation is immediately experienced, and the *breast*, or something about the *breast*, immediately strikes us as its seat. We speak, too of the *breast's* being joyful, of its being inspired with hope, of its burning with resentment; or, referring to something within the breast, of the *heart's* being full of kindness, of its feeling sentiments of compassion, and so on,—language, which, though no doubt metaphorical, yet evidently indicates some very prevalent conviction as the source of the metaphor. I may add, that not a few philosophers have expressly maintained, that the *breast* is the seat of our *desires*, *affections*, and *passions*. Dr Paley was plainly inclined to this opinion, and others have avowed it with the greatest confidence. I am not sure that I rightly understand their meaning; but their doctrine certainly implies this much—that the emotions connected with our desires, affections, and



passions, are occasioned by operations about the interior of the breast.

3. If our emotions arise from the mind's producing some effect on the body about the interior of the breast, it must happen that if any physiological influence produce a similar effect, the consequent results must also be similar. In other words, physiological influence must be capable of giving rise to emotions as well as mental influence. Now we have only to recollect what was formerly stated, to be satisfied, that cases of this kind happen continually. Some people, as I remarked, in consequence of their physiological temperament, are habitually melancholy; that is, they experience feelings or emotions of habitual melancholy. Some people, in consequence of their physiological temperament, are habitually cheerful; that is, they experience emotions of habitual cheerfulness. Some people, in consequence of their physiological temperament are habitually anxious; some are habitually irritable, some are habitually good-humoured, some are habitually sedate, some are habitually impetuous, some are habitually timid, &c. &c.

I may likewise remark, as I did formerly, that we frequently feel sportive without any thing prosperous to have excited our mirth, and frequently dull without any thing adverse to have excited our gloominess. An hungry man, according to the proverb, is an angry man; and it certainly often happens, that a person fasting is more irritable than after a hearty meal. Young children when fasting are almost always fretful. Children of the same parents have frequently a family likeness in their outward appearance, and the



likeness is no less evident in their interior temperament. In an average of cases, the children of the ardent are incomparably more warm-hearted than the children of the dull and phlegmatic, and the children of the mild incomparably more gentle than the children of the fierce and unrelenting. In our progress to maturity, the condition of the body undergoes some important alterations, and alterations no less important take place in our emotions. Feelings of which a child is utterly unconscious, gradually make their appearance, and exert the most efficient influence on the whole of our future lives.

Dr Brown, though his system led him to ascribe our emotions *directly* to the mind, yet is compelled to admit the agency of the body. "In the early period of life," he remarks in his *fifty-second Lecture*, "this alacrity of spirit is like that *bodily alacrity*, with which every limb, as it bounds along, seems to have a delightful consciousness of vigour. To suspend the *mental cheerfulness* for any length of time, is then as difficult as to keep fixed for any length of time those muscles, to which exertion is almost a species of repose, and repose itself fatigue. In more advanced life, this sort of *animal gladness* is rarer. We are not happy without knowing why we are happy; and though we may still be susceptible of joy, perhaps as intense, or even more, than in our years of unreflecting merriment, our joy must arise from a cause of corresponding importance. Yet, even down to the close of extreme old age, there still recur occasionally some gleams of this almost *instinctive happiness*, like a vision of other years, or, like those brilliant and un-

expected coruscations, which sometimes flash along the midnight of a wintry sky, and of which we are too ignorant of the circumstances that produce them, to know when to predict their return.

“Of *melancholy*, I may remark, in like manner, that it is a state of mind which even the gayest must feel, for some time, after any calamity, and which many feel for the greater part of life, without any particular calamity to which they can ascribe it. Without knowing why they should be sorrowful, they still *are* sorrowful,—even though the weathercock should *not* have moved a single point nearer to the east, nor a single additional cloud given a little more shade to the vivid brightness of the sun.”

It also deserves notice, that the more apt the body is to give rise to a particular emotion, the less influence is required from the mind to give rise to it. The slightest apprehension of injury in the mind of him who is constitutionally irritable, will give rise to emotions of irritation; the slightest expectation of good in the mind of him who is constitutionally cheerful, will give rise to emotions of cheerfulness; and the slightest prospect of evil in the mind of him who is constitutionally gloomy, will give rise to emotions of gloominess. Even the same person, as his bodily constitution varies, will feel a different degree of tendency to a particular emotion at different times.

It is not easy to see how any one can raise a question about the explanation of these facts. Beyond all controversy, there are two kinds of influence which act on the body, and give rise to emotions,—the influence of the body itself, and the influence of the mind;



and hence, as above mentioned, the greater the influence exerted by the former, the less is the influence required from the latter.

4. The prevailing doctrine among philosophers is not only unsupported by evidence, but directly opposed by it. The import of their doctrine is, that our emotions are excited by certain ideas or perceptions of the mind, which, by the original constitution of our nature, are fitted *directly* to produce them. The perception of injustice, it is said, excites emotions of resentment; the perception of kindness, emotions of gratitude; and the perception of cruelty, emotions of detestation; and do so *directly*, in consequence of some influence which the Author of nature has originally impressed on them.

But this doctrine, plausible at first sight though it seems, is utterly incompatible with many of the phenomena. The same perception, it is well known, often excites different emotions in different individuals, and in the same individual at different times. What gives one man joy, often gives another sorrow; and what gives one man disgust, is often viewed by another with pleasure or insensibility. The same objects, too, which once were regarded with feelings of attachment, are now beheld with the utmost indifference; while others, which were once regarded with indifference, are now beheld with the utmost attachment. The strength and steadiness of our emotions are also entitled to attention. On innumerable occasions, our emotions exhibit a degree of vividness and permanency, which seem utterly beyond the usual power of ideas or perceptions to produce. The restlessness of



anxiety is altogether excruciating, the raptures of joy are hardly less intense, the violence of rage is equal to either; and the feelings they involve far more resemble the strong and lasting *sensations* arising immediately from the body, than the feeble and fugitive effects produced directly by ideas of the mind. So much, indeed, have these circumstances forced themselves on the notice of mankind, that, in popular language, our emotions very frequently receive the name of *sensations*,—a name characteristically applied to feelings resulting immediately from the body. I may mention, as an additional consideration, that our emotions often continue in very lively exercise after the perceptions which are supposed to have excited them have entirely disappeared. A person who is inflamed with anger does not feel immediately composed on finding that his anger is groundless; nor does a person who is oppressed with fear, feel immediately tranquil on finding himself in safety. In both cases, the feelings wear off only by degrees; a circumstance which strongly indicates the gradual subsidence of some bodily agitation as their *proximate cause*, but has very little analogy to the rapid and almost instantaneous transitions occasioned by perceptions in the mind.

But perhaps the most satisfactory evidence for the doctrine I have proposed, is its accordance with the phenomena, and the facility with which it enables us to explain them.

1. When any operation of the body is performed with great energy, the sensations excited are exceedingly acute and often very painful; and our emotions

discover the very same features. Even intense joy is often distressing, and instead of the sportive and mirthful aspect which naturally belongs to it, may assume a character of the most solemn seriousness, and overpower the whole frame. Exceedingly favourable news require to be communicated—especially to persons of delicate health—with nearly as much caution as news exceedingly unfavourable.

2. When any bodily operation is long continued, we experience very sensible feelings of weariness or fatigue, and are obliged to remit our efforts till our strength is recruited; and every one knows that the very same thing happens with the long continuance of any emotion. Though at first quite pleasurable, yet such a degree of exhaustion and weariness is gradually induced, that we are glad to exchange it for almost any thing,—even for what is painful.

3. When any bodily operation is very suddenly excited, it always produces more powerful feelings than when performed deliberately; and the same is the case with our emotions. An interesting event or observation that is altogether unexpected, is uniformly productive of more lively emotions, than one that is anticipated. *Surprise* is allowed by every one to have great influence in promoting the strength of our emotions.

4. While custom increases our tendency to any bodily operation, it is well known that it diminishes the strength of the feelings with which its performance is accompanied,—the nerves and muscles acquiring the power of acting so gently and so easily, that the sensations which ensue become exceedingly mo-



derate. All the habitual actions performed by the body are very little felt. It should consequently happen, if our emotions arise directly from bodily actions, that while custom increases the tendency to the actions, it should diminish the strength of the accompanying emotions. Nothing can more exactly accord with what really takes place. All our habitual desires, affections, &c. in their ordinary mode of exercise, are felt very mildly. A parent may be influenced by the most powerful attachment to his children, and willingly toil day and night for their support, and yet his feelings, instead of being violent and forcible, be rather placid and equable, and but moderately calculated to attract his notice. The same remark is applicable to all our habitual principles of action without exception. In their ordinary mode of exercise, they do not excite feelings proportioned to their *strength*, but rather those of a very gentle and sometimes of a hardly perceptible kind.

Such principles, however, having acquired great power, should be very steady in their exercise, and difficult to be overcome, and the slightest knowledge of human nature shows that they are so. A sudden predilection may be exceedingly violent, but it is usually destroyed as easily and as rapidly as it is excited; while an attachment founded on a long-continued preference, will maintain its energy in spite of the greatest obstacles, and even revive with the most forcible action, after circumstances appear to have completely extinguished it.

5. When any thing interferes with a bodily operation, to which we have a tendency, we commonly ex-



perience a degree of pain. A person habituated to an awkward gesture, gives way to it insensibly; but he cannot resist it without some uneasiness. Here, too, the analogy of our emotions is evident. A desire, for instance, to express our sentiments on any subject, if *instantly* and *freely* indulged, is hardly ever felt. In fact, in such a case there is often so little *feeling*, that it would not be easy to convince the unreflecting, that there is any desire at all, and that the whole is not the result of some mysterious species of insensitive mechanism. Let the desire, however, be *impeded* in its course,—let us, when about to speak, be prevented from uttering a syllable,—and the emotions will not only become perceptible, but may even become so acute as to involve the most restless anxiety. A powerful attachment may subsist between two individuals, while they themselves are very little aware of its existence; but let any thing occur to threaten a separation, and its existence will be felt in a moment,—the apprehended separation interfering with the exercise of their attachment. The affection of a parent for his children, as already remarked, is usually very tranquil; but let any of them be exposed to serious danger, and tranquillity is at an end, and the most afflictive anxiety experienced in its room,—the apprehended danger, as in the former case, interfering with the exercise of his attachment.

I may here observe, that as we commonly judge of the strength of any thing by that of the ingredients of which it is composed, we should be apt to estimate the strength of our active principles, both by the *feelings* they excite, and the *tendencies* they involve:

and we actually do so. A person who is highly incensed, is said to be influenced by *strong* resentment, though perhaps his resentment is over in a few hours; and another whose mind has been long bent on revenge, is also said to be influenced by *strong* resentment, though perhaps his feelings have all along been exceedingly moderate. This mode of speaking is occasionally the source of some degree of confusion; but it is merely because we refer to different circumstances,—in the one case, referring to the strength of the *emotions*; in the other, to that of the *tendencies*.

6. If our emotions arise from the mind's producing some action in the body, it must happen that the presence of the objects by which they are usually excited, must sometimes destroy both them and the tendencies from which they proceed. If we are exposed, for instance, to an object of danger, the first thing that occurs to us is to avoid or repel it; and consequently some action to avoid or repel it is apt to take place, and certain emotions to be experienced; but if, in point of fact, the object be neither avoided nor repelled, the idea of it must gradually become associated with other ideas than those of the action; and consequently the action and the emotions must gradually subside. The same must happen in the case of the acquisition of pleasure. If any pleasurable object be presented to us, the first thing that occurs to us is to obtain it; and consequently some action for that purpose is apt to take place, and certain emotions to be experienced; but if, in point of fact, the object is not obtained, the idea of it must gradually become associated with other ideas than those of the action; and,



therefore, as in the former case, both the action and the emotions must gradually subside. The same must happen after the acquisition of any pleasurable object is secured; for though the influence of association may occasion certain actions and emotions for a time, yet, after the object is obtained, the idea of it must gradually become associated with other ideas than those of acting, and therefore all action and emotion must gradually subside. And, in short, whenever an object exists in such circumstances as to preclude the idea of our performing any action concerning it, both our tendency towards it, and our emotions respecting it, must, if the doctrine I have proposed be just, gradually be annihilated. No conclusions can more entirely accord with the phenomena. A person *accustomed* to scenes of danger, will behave with tranquillity, though, *at first*, he experienced the most violent agitation; a person *familiarized* with the absolute unattainableness of any thing, will view it with composure, though, *at first*, he desired it with the most corroding anxiousness; and a person *habituated* to the possession of an object, may regard it with indifference, though he *once* viewed it with the most rapturous exultation.

According to the prevailing doctrine, these very curious and interesting facts are to be explained on the maxim, that, while all our active principles are strengthened by exercise, our passive ones are weakened by it; but no explanation can be more thoroughly unsatisfactory. Is our tendency to avoid danger a passive principle? Is our tendency to obtain pleasure a passive principle? Or, in short, is our tendency to



perform any action whatsoever a passive principle? Are not all such tendencies manifestly active? and by giving way to them, is not their power augmented precisely like that of other tendencies? By fleeing from danger, instead of becoming more cool and courageous, we uniformly become more timid. By constantly obtaining what we desire, we always become the more bent on indulgence. A child which has all its wishes complied with, is ever impatient of contradiction, and eager for gratification.

It is not the mere presence of an object, it must be observed, that produces the results above mentioned, but its presence in such circumstances as to supersede all thought of action. In other circumstances, the results may be very different. Nothing, for example, is more calculated to strengthen an attachment, than the being much in the presence of the beloved object, but doubtful of obtaining possession. Absolute hopelessness and absolute assurance, by destroying all thought of exertion, have a weakening, and even a fatal influence; but *uncertainty*, by keeping the necessity of exertion continually in view, has an influence in the highest degree invigorating.

7. If, along with an object on which an emotion depends, we witness another that is altogether *uninteresting*, the idea of the second object must not only become associated with that of the first, but also with that of the bodily action from which the emotion immediately proceeds. Hence, when we witness the second object on a future occasion, it should not only have a tendency to suggest the first, but also to excite the emotion to which the first gives rise; and in fact,

may excite it, though the first object do not occur to us at all. In like manner, may a third object, coexisting with the second, acquire power to excite the emotion, though the second object do not occur to us at all ; and so on indefinitely. Nothing can more completely accord with the phenomena. Our emotions of attachment to any person, it is well known, are never limited to the person himself, but extend to the places he frequents, the house which he occupies, the books which he reads ; in fact, to every thing with which we are accustomed to associate him. Our emotions of resentment are no less diffusive, and embrace not merely the obnoxious individual, but every other object to which he has the smallest relation. Often, too, our emotions are excited with the most powerful energy, when the primary cause of excitement is utterly unthought of. A person attached to money, for the sake of the gratifications it enables him to procure, often becomes attached to it afterwards for its own sake ; and a person offended with another for some cause of displeasure, often feels a continuance of his dislike after the original ground of offence is entirely removed. The great majority, indeed, of our predilections and antipathies arise from circumstances which have no primary influence to excite them ; and it is chiefly on this account that we experience such difficulty in tracing them to their source.

Mr Alison, in his valuable *Essay on Taste*, seems uniformly to proceed on the supposition, that our emotions are never excited except when the primary cause of excitement is brought into view ; and this I cannot but regard as the greatest imperfection with which



his ingenious and interesting speculations are chargeable. "There is no man," says he, "who has not some interesting associations, with particular scenes, or airs, or books; or who does not feel their beauty or sublimity enhanced to him by such connexions. The view of the house where one was born, of the school where one was educated, and where the gay years of infancy were passed, is indifferent to no man. They recall so many images of past happiness and past affections; they are connected with so many strong and valued emotions, and lead altogether to so long a train of feelings and recollections, that there is hardly any scene which one ever beholds with so much rapture. There are songs also that we have heard in our infancy, which, when brought to our remembrance in after years, raise emotions, for which we cannot well account, and which, though perhaps very indifferent in themselves, still continue, from this association, and from the variety of conceptions which they kindle in our minds, to be our favourites through life."

That objects on *many occasions* excite emotions in the way that Mr Alison here mentions, cannot admit of a doubt; but that they do so on every occasion, is a doctrine which no person who duly attends to the phenomena, can possibly allow. The primary cause of our emotions is often altogether unheeded or unknown. Instead of experiencing *trains* of conceptions, as Mr Alison imagines, we are frequently overpowered at once, by a set of overwhelming feelings, which seem evidently to arise from the objects before us. It is to mistake, indeed, the whole character of association, to imagine that it never can give rise to an emotion,



without bringing into view the circumstances which primarily occasioned it. Beyond all controversy, the tendency of association is to communicate an exciting influence to objects and circumstances, which once were merely accessory and contemporaneous. Burke, in his Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, takes this view of the subject—and the slightest reflection may satisfy us that it is the just one.

In the case of taste, too, (and it is it which forms the subject of Mr Alison's speculations,) the emotions must be so connected with conceptions of the objects, as to appear in some measure united with them. A beautiful object, as I formerly remarked, does not merely excite emotions of beauty in *us*, but seems to have the beauty attached to *itself*. We never could convince the common people that they do not perceive the beauty of things with their very eyes, precisely as they perceive the things themselves.

I may also remark, that as our *conceptions* of emotions are frequently associated with conceptions of objects, and as such conceptions have a degree of similarity to emotions, (for conceptions when positive have always some similarity to their prototypes,) they should be found, if the doctrine I have proposed be just, to communicate to objects something of a similar colouring. They actually do so. A beautiful object, though contemplated without any emotion at all, appears to the mind to be beautiful; an ugly object, though contemplated without any emotion at all, appears to the mind to be ugly; and a sublime object, though contemplated without any emotion at all, appears to the mind to be sublime.

Such appearances, indeed, are exactly analogous to those which are experienced in ordinary perception, and depend on the same principle,—the principle of association. An object seen at a distance excites a *sensation* of colour, and the sensation is so associated with the conception of the object, that the object itself seems coloured; but not only does it seem thus while the sensation is experienced. Even while we barely think of the object, it is regarded by the mind as coloured. It is impossible for a person possessed of sight to form a conception,—I mean a positive conception,—of an object, without regarding it as having some colour.

The phenomena connected with taste can never be explained, unless the facts now referred to, and the principles on which they depend, be taken into account. In reality, such facts form a large proportion of the subjects about which taste is conversant; for on innumerable occasions objects appear beautiful, or ugly, or sublime, without exciting any sensible emotion whatever; and the same is frequently the case even with the common words of language. The elegance and beauty of particular expressions do not always depend either on the expressions themselves or on the emotions they occasion, but very often on associated *conceptions* of emotions. The author of the article on *Beauty*, in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, represents the beauty of things as depending on *small pieces*, as it were, of our affections, and passions, &c. and he plainly has in his eye the *conceptions* I now speak of, for these have always a degree of resemblance to their prototypes, and seem,



of course, to partake of their nature ; or, in the language of this author, to be *small pieces* of their prototypes.

8. Emotions are apt to be conjoined with various outward actions, and although the conjunction is no doubt owing in part to physiological causes, yet the phenomena seem clearly to prove, that it is chiefly to be ascribed to ideas in the mind. An emotion of aversion, for example, includes the idea of our *shrinking* from something ; and this idea, by the influence of association, should be connected with that of every part of the body which the mind for the moment happens to have in its view, and should consequently produce a corresponding movement in these parts. Now we have only to look to facts to see that this is actually the case. When averse to any thing, if we happen to have the hand in view, we are exceedingly apt to shrink back with the hand ; if the head, we are exceedingly apt to shrink back with the head ; and if the features of the countenance, we are exceedingly apt to make some shrinking movement with these features ; and so on.

The movements, too, in whatever part of the body they take place, completely obey the influence which regulates ideas. Our ideas, to a certain extent, are under the power of the will ; and every one knows that we have considerable power to yield to the movements occasioned by aversion, or to suppress them. The more frequently our ideas occur, the more apt are they in similar circumstances again to occur ; and every one knows, that the more frequently we yield to the movements occasioned by aversion, the more



apt are we in similar circumstances again to yield to them. Ideas, too, of movements in the bodies of others, are exceedingly apt to excite ideas of similar movements in our own; and every one knows that our gesticulations in the case of aversion, as well as in other cases, are materially affected by the example of our neighbours. We are apt, indeed, to catch the air and manner of our neighbours in every thing.

In the same way are we to account for the outward movements or gesticulations occasioned by our other emotions. All our emotions involve ideas, or are often connected with ideas, corresponding to the movements they occasion; and it is these ideas, operating according to the law of Congruity, which produce the movements. In anger, our emotions are turbulent and threatening, and the gesticulations we give way to are of the same character. In joy, our emotions are lively and frolicsome, and our gesticulations are so likewise. In grief, they are sedate and gloomy, and our gesticulations are then dull and sluggish: and so in all other cases.

We are always apt, too, to give way to our *customary* mode of expressing our emotions. The vulgar and uneducated are in the practice of expressing their emotions with considerable bluntness; while the learned and accomplished are accustomed to express *theirs* with more refinement; and neither of them could easily exchange their customary modes of expression for those of the others. Even an awkward and unnatural mode of expression, when long persevered in, is not easily relinquished. The same is the case with the connexion between every emotion and outward action without

exception. The influence of custom,—that is, the influence of association—uniformly strengthens the connexion, and increases the difficulty of dissolving it.

An opposite custom has equal influence the contrary way. By a little attention, we can check those movements of the features of the countenance which usually accompany our emotions ; and custom, we find, gives us such a power of checking them, that we soon acquire a facility of suppressing them altogether. A person much accustomed to conceal his emotions, can screen them from the eyes of the most penetrating. They may exist in his own breast in all their strength, and yet his habits of disguise enable him to dis sever them from their usual outward symptoms. In like manner, may these outward symptoms exist, and yet be dis severed from the inward emotions. And, in point of fact, nothing is more common than for people to exhibit the indications of emotions, of which, at the time, they are utterly unconscious. Both the interior emotions, too, and their outward indications, may be dis severed from every action of substantial worth with which they should be attended. Many of those who value themselves on the high refinement of their manners, are in a great measure unqualified for the performance of any practical good. Their emotions may be excited and displayed with the most agreeable effect, but dissociated from every useful result, they are in no degree superior to those of an opera or dancing girl,—fit only to amuse in the hours of frivolity and idleness. Persons of sedentary and contemplative habits discover a character in some respects similar. They often feel emotions that are warm and benevo-



lent, and are deeply interested in the welfare of mankind ; but they are seldom much inclined to outward exertion. Those accustomed to active life, are liable to err on the opposite side. Being chiefly habituated to outward doings, they are apt to have their internal sentiments, even on very important occasions, superseded. Their practical virtues may be of a very high order, and performed with exemplary diligence ; but, disjoined from internal feelings, they often engage in the most interesting undertakings with a degree of composure and insensibility which fills others with astonishment. A practised surgeon will amputate a leg or an arm, with as little emotion as an ordinary individual will perform the most trifling duty.

Nor is there the smallest difficulty in understanding the process by which such hardihood is acquired. Emotions, instead of being necessary to the right performance of outward actions, are often prejudicial ; and by frequent repetition of the actions, the ideas which give rise to them come to be suggested in preference to those which give rise to the emotions, and of course the actions come to be performed without the emotions.

9. Mankind frequently enter with much readiness into each other's emotions, and sometimes so completely, that one and the same mind seems to animate a great number of them. This remarkable tendency has been looked on by many with no small astonishment, and regarded as something which we are rather to admire than to account for. If the doctrine, however, which I have proposed be admitted, it may be accounted for in a few sentences. Every emotion is the result



of some interior bodily movement or action, occasioned by certain ideas of the mind; and of course, if we obtain the ideas along with our neighbours, we must be apt to perform the interior action, and experience the emotions along with them likewise. If we witness the grief of a person, for example, we must be apt, if no counteracting cause interfere, to obtain some idea of those interior movements on which his emotions of grief immediately depend, and, of course, we ourselves must be apt to experience similar movements and emotions. "Grief and joy," says Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, "strongly expressed in the look and gestures of any one, at once affect the spectator with a degree of a like painful or agreeable emotion. A smiling face is, to every body that sees it, a cheerful object; as a sorrowful countenance, on the other hand, is a melancholy one."

Whatever, too, facilitates our entering into the ideas which excite emotions in others, in the same degree facilitates our sympathy with them. When informed that a person has lost an only child, we can far more easily enter into the various *ideas* that affect him, than when we merely witness the symptoms of grief in his outward appearance. In the former case, our information is definite and specific, in the latter it is vague and general; and accordingly, we always enter into his *feelings* more readily in the former case than in the latter. "Our sympathy with the grief or joy of another," says Adam Smith, "before we are informed of the cause of either, is always extremely imperfect. General lamentations, which express nothing but the anguish of the sufferer, create rather a

curiosity to inquire into his situation, along with some disposition to sympathize with him, than any actual sympathy that is very sensible. The first question which we ask is—What has befallen you? Till this be answered, though we are uneasy, both from the vague idea of his misfortune, and still more from torturing ourselves with conjectures about what it may be, yet our fellow-feeling is not very considerable." "Sympathy, therefore," he adds, "does not so much arise from the view of the person, as from that of the situation which excites it."

Persons of the same condition of life can more easily enter into the *ideas* which affect one another, than persons of dissimilar conditions; and in the same proportion we find they can enter into each other's *emotions*. A poor man can far more easily enter into the *views* which affect the poor, than into those which affect the opulent; and he can likewise far more easily *sympathize* with the poor than with the opulent. The opulent are in exactly the same state with their sympathies; so are the learned, so are the unfortunate, so are the young, so are the old, so are all mankind.

"When we have read a book or poem," says Adam Smith, "so often that we no longer find any amusement in reading it by ourselves, we can still take pleasure in reading it to a companion. To him it has all the graces of novelty; we enter into the surprise and admiration it naturally excites in him, but which it is no longer capable of exciting in us." The reason is manifest: our ideas of the effects it produces upon him have a tendency, from the influence of similarity or imitation formerly explained, to produce ideas of



the same effects in ourselves, and consequently, if no counteracting cause interfere, to produce the effects in reality.

"We sometimes feel for another," says the same author, "a passion of which he himself seems altogether incapable. We blush for the impudence and rudeness of another, though he himself appears to have no sense of the impropriety of his behaviour." This case admits of as obvious an explanation as the former. The sight of impudence and rudeness in another, excites in our minds ideas of those interior movements on which emotions of shame immediately depend; and though he should not experience either the ideas, or the movements, or the emotions, yet that is no reason why they should not be experienced by us. We are often led to do things, as I formerly endeavoured to show, not because we *actually* observe them done by others, but because we *conceive* that the circumstances of their situation are fitted to make them do them.

In the same way are we to explain what Smith calls our sympathy with the insane, with the dead, and the sympathy of a mother when she hears the moanings of her helpless infant. In all such cases, there is a view of circumstances which we deem calculated to excite certain feelings, and though the feelings should not be excited in the principal person, yet that is no reason why they should not be excited in us.

It is quite unnecessary, I apprehend, to adduce other instances in proof of the doctrine I have stated,—that the proximate cause of our emotions is some movement or action of the body about the interior of the breast, and that, in so far as this movement depends



on the mind, it is occasioned by ideas operating according to the law of Congruity.

Our emotions constitute a class of feelings entitled to every possible attention. They are involved in all our desires, affections, and passions, and form their most vivid elements; they are at the foundation, too, of all our perceptions of the beauties of literature, and indeed of all our perceptions of the beauties both of nature and of art; and even our moral and religious perceptions are essentially modified by them. Dr Brown goes so far as to make them the source of every moral perception whatever, so that without them we could have no moral or religious notions at all; but though this is certainly going to an extreme, yet no person who attends to the subject can doubt that their influence on our moral and religious perceptions is in the highest degree important.

I must again, however, advert to the subject of *materialism*, for it is by no means impossible that the supposition of the body's being concerned in the production of emotions, may be regarded by some as too favourable to that heresy. In reality, however, it gives it no countenance whatever. Our emotions, let their proximate source be what it may, are in their own nature *purely mental*, and are no more to be confounded with material things than the sensations or ideas arising from impressions on our outward organs. Would any one allege that the doctrine which maintains that the proximate cause of the sensation of colour, is some impression on the body; that the doctrine which maintains that the proximate cause of the sensation of sound, is some impression on the body; or that the doctrine

which maintains that the proximate causes of the sensations of taste, cold, heat, &c. &c. are also impressions on the body, is favourable to materialism? The doctrine, however, that the proximate cause of our emotions is some impression on the body, is precisely of the same kind; and if the former has no tendency to materialism, neither has the latter.

The only tendency of this doctrine is to lower our ideas of the source from which our emotions are immediately derived. The common doctrine of philosophers ascribes their production to something inconceivably more elevated than the gross and vulgar instrumentality of body, represents them as quite of a sublime and ethereal original, and as giving to human nature a dignity and a worth to which nothing earthly can ever be compared. But the sobriety of truth is not to be sacrificed to these transcendental fancies. The dignity of human nature does not consist in any species of emotion whatever; but in the exercise of correct, moral, and religious principles; nor is there the slightest evidence that our emotions have any other origin than that which I have assigned them.\*

The friends of *Immaterialism* often discover much imprudence in defending their doctrine. The great argument in their favour is, that our ideas and sensations, from whatever source they come, are entirely different from matter, are governed by entirely different laws, are connected with an entirely different power, and produce entirely different results, and should therefore be considered as belonging to something of an entirely different nature. If they give up

\* See Note Q.



this argument, they give up their whole cause,—at least in so far as revelation does not come to their aid,—and yet, by not a few, it is treated with indifference, or even represented as favourable to their adversaries. Burke, for example, has been accused of a species of *Materialism*, for alleging that the emotion of beauty arises from a certain relaxation of the nerves and fibres belonging to the body. Such a notion may be very unphilosophical; but it has evidently as little to do with *Materialism* as the common doctrine, that the feeling or sensation of heat arises from some affection of the body, and the feeling or sensation of sweetness from some other affection of the body. In like manner, Gall and Spurzheim have been accused of *Materialism*, for maintaining that every part of the brain is connected with the exercise of some appropriate mental function. Their doctrine appears to be utterly unworthy of the name of philosophy; but though it were established to-morrow, it would be as far from *Materialism*, as the doctrine universally received—that we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and feel with our hands. The friends of *Immaterialism* are completely betraying their cause, by advancing such nonsensical accusations, as they necessarily convey the impression, that every idea, or feeling, or function, immediately connected with the body, is itself of the nature of body—the very basis on which *Materialism* rests. The ground which they ought to take is that which I have already mentioned,—that our ideas and feelings, however closely connected with matter, are themselves completely different from it, are regulated by completely different laws, are con-



nected with a completely different power, and produce completely different results ; and should, therefore, be regarded as belonging to something of a completely different nature. With this argument, the most intimate connexion between matter and mind, leaves the doctrine of *Immaterialism* completely untouched, while without it the doctrine seems to have no foundation in reason whatever, and can only be defended by the testimony of revelation.

## SECT. V.

*Miscellaneous Effects.*

We frequently perform actions on sudden emergencies, which some philosophers are disposed to impute to no distinct principle whatever,—such as the sudden shutting of our eyes when a stroke is aimed at them, the sudden efforts which we make to recover ourselves when in danger of falling, &c. With regard to the first of these instances, there is hardly any room for doubt. From the inconvenience of receiving a stroke in the eye, we soon come to feel a degree of apprehension when liable to it, and also to acquire the knowledge that the closing of the eye is useful for its prevention. The consequence is, that when exposed to such a stroke, the apprehension suggests the idea of the proper motion, and, as the law of Congruity requires, the motion takes place, and the eye is closed. The second instance seems equally indubitable. From the inconvenience of falling, we soon come to feel a degree of apprehension when liable to it, and also to acquire the knowledge of the motions which are pro-

per for its prevention ; and hence, when apt to fall, the apprehension suggests the idea of the motions ; and if our balance be not altogether lost, the motions take place as the law of Congruity requires, and the fall is avoided. In some cases, the efforts which we make to recover ourselves when in danger of falling are of some continuance, and in such cases we are quite sensible of the ideas of the motions now mentioned. We feel ourselves shrinking from the thought of falling, and fixing our whole minds on the efforts that are necessary to our recovery.

When a horse on which we are riding stumbles, our hands and our feet are instantly at work to support him, though our efforts are obviously useless. The case is the same with our efforts when a boat in which we are sailing is in danger of oversetting. But neither of these cases present any difficulty. The *immediate* suggestion of our minds is, that our efforts are of service ; and it is only from reflection that we see their uselessness.

Dr Reid imputes all such efforts to instinct, an opinion which, whether true or false, is in no degree incompatible with the law which I have mentioned ; for instinct may evidently operate according to the law of Congruity as well as according to any other law. There does not, however, appear the smallest necessity for referring them to instinct. They seem plainly to be owing to early habits of association, and are not more remarkable than a thousand other associations, which no person thinks of referring to instinct. Instinct, at the best, is but a very vague and dubious principle of explanation.



2. On occasions of great and sudden danger, we sometimes feel for a while a complete incapacity to avoid the object which threatens us; and yet when once our energies are fairly excited, can flee from it with great celerity. Nor does our conduct on such occasions proceed from any thing like tremor or perturbation; for we rather feel ourselves in a state of insensibility, and are apt to ascribe our inaction not to perturbation, but to a suspension of our faculties, to a temporary stupefaction, or to the danger's having taken such possession of us as to produce a kind of fascination, and to rivet us to the spot where we are standing. The true explanation seems evidently to be, that in our hazardous situation, our minds are so occupied at first with the object of danger, that the ideas of the proper motions for escaping do not readily occur to us, although, when once they occur, we can repeat them at pleasure. The case is exceedingly similar to many well-known phenomena of memory, where, though on a sudden emergency, an idea we are in quest of may not readily appear; yet, no sooner is it excited, than we can repeat it as quickly and as frequently as we think proper.

3. On some occasions, we feel a very sensible tendency to perform actions the very reverse of those we wish to perform. Some people, in looking from a lofty elevation, as from the battlements of a high tower, feel a tendency to throw themselves down, though quite desirous to avoid all danger. A friend once told me, that in walking along a quay in the fury of a storm, he felt a very perceptible tendency to plunge into the tide that was raging beneath him.



Or, to give an instance of more common occurrence ; if, while engaged in conversation, we be very desirous to avoid mentioning a particular person's name, it is ten to one that it be among the first which we do mention ; or, if a public speaker be very desirous to avoid a particular mode of expression, it is by no means unlikely that he speedily fall into it.

If the law of Congruity be admitted, the explanation of all such facts may be given in a single sentence. A strong desire to avoid any action, necessarily implies our having a firm conception or idea of the action ; and such an idea, according to the law of Congruity, must have a tendency to make the action take place.

4. When we look in any direction with one eye, we have always a tendency to look in the same direction, or nearly in the same direction, with the other. This remarkable tendency is plainly not owing to any thing in the physical structure of the eyes themselves, for their nerves and muscles are quite unconnected, but to some influence that is mental. The following seems evidently to be the explanation :

When we look to any thing, it is for the purpose of observing it ; and as we observe it most accurately with both eyes, we are consequently apt to employ both. We are under the influence of a motive that induces us to employ the one eye no less than the other. The motions of the eyes, too, are performed in consequence of certain ideas of them ; and as the ideas are remarkably similar, the one must be apt to excite the other, and consequently to make the motion of the one eye accompany that of the other.

Custom likewise has great influence. We are constantly in the practice of moving our eyes in a parallel direction ; and the ideas, therefore, of their so moving, must be very intimately associated, and consequently the movements themselves be very closely conjoined.

That custom has great influence, is evident from what we see in children, with whom the custom is not fully established ; for we find, that with a little attention, they can move their eyes in any direction they please, and often exhibit very remarkable distortions. Even persons of mature age, in cases where custom does not interfere, can vary the parallelism of their eyes without difficulty. In looking at one of the fixed stars, the axes of the eyes are almost mathematically parallel, while in looking at an object only a few inches remote, they are considerably inclined ; and yet we can look at the one object as easily as at the other.

We may illustrate the case still farther by a different example : If a seaman lay hold of a rope with each of his hands, and be asked to pull with only one of them, it is ten to one, if he be not on his guard, that he pull with both, although the nerves and muscles of the two hands are quite as unconnected as those of the two eyes. The explanation is the same as above. When the seaman receives the order to pull, the first thing that occurs to him, is the action he has to perform ; and as that is best done with both hands, he is of course apt to employ both. The ideas, too, which occasion the motion of both hands, are exceedingly similar, and therefore the one is exceedingly apt to suggest the other, and consequently to make



the action of the one hand accompany that of the other. Precisely, too, as in the former case, custom has here great influence. The seaman is much in the practice of pulling with both hands, and the ideas of the action of both, therefore, must be very intimately associated, and consequently the actions themselves very closely conjoined.

5. In general, we feel a much stronger tendency to speak what we believe to be *true*, than what we believe to be *false*. This, like many other tendencies, has been represented as exceedingly mysterious and unaccountable; but, in reality, few things are more evident. The process of speaking, in as far as the philosophy of the mind is concerned, includes three particulars,—ideas of things, ideas of words, and ideas of certain organic movements which give utterance to the words. By frequent repetition, the ideas of the things become associated with the ideas of the words which denote them, and the ideas of the words, with the ideas of the movements which express them; and the question, therefore, respecting truth and falsehood, reduces itself to this; Whether do those ideas of things which we deem true, or those ideas of things which we deem false, most readily occur to us? for whatever set most readily occurs, will certainly, if the process now mentioned be just, be most readily uttered. It is almost needless, however, to answer such a question, for every one is aware that true ideas, or those that we deem true, are of most ready occurrence. These, indeed, are merely our ordinary sensations, perceptions, recollections, and other such phenomena; and though speaking, therefore, were merely the physical conse-



quence of the natural current of our thoughts, we should most frequently speak truth. Falsehood—I mean known falsehood—implies, in general, a departure from the usual current of our thoughts. It is something which in general requires art and contrivance; and even after the strongest habits of it are formed, the truth is ever apt to break forth. In the language of the common people, truth is nearest to the lips, and comes most easily out of them; while a liar, as they remark, has need of a good memory, and is apt to betray himself even when most circumspect.

It must be observed, however, that though in speaking according to the ordinary current of our thoughts, there will be a great preponderance on the side of truth; yet I am far from meaning to allege, that our speaking in this way will secure an adherence to truth in every instance. Mingled with our ordinary thoughts, there is always a number of strange and erroneous imaginations; and if we give utterance to these, we shall certainly often speak very incorrectly. To guard against such improprieties, custom, in speaking truth, is of great service, particularly when the custom, as it usually is, is connected with moral considerations—as the meanness of falsehood, the evils which falsehood occasions, the discredit in which it should be held, and so on.

An opposite custom has no less influence the contrary way. Some people who would not assert what they *distinctly* know to be false, yet are not sufficiently on their guard against the illusions of fancy, and often assert what they do not distinctly know to be true. Others are almost always in the regions of fancy, and

their assertions contain a still less proportion of truth. Neither of these characters may have formed any express design to deceive, and yet, from yielding to the influence of very improper habits, their statements are to be listened to with great caution.

6. When a person performs a mechanical operation to which he is unaccustomed, he experiences at first considerable difficulty, and yet, after some practice, he not only comes to perform it with facility, but even to feel a proneness to perform it. Such a phenomenon, if the doctrine already stated be just, admits of an explanation exceedingly simple. It is exactly the same in kind, indeed, with that of the harpsichord formerly taken notice of, and may be explained thus: When we attempt to perform an unusual operation, the different muscles of the body which may be employed on the occasion, are apt to be brought into action in an improper degree, at improper times, and in conjunction with others, whose influence is unnecessary or hurtful, and much awkwardness and embarrassment must consequently ensue. By repetition, however, the ideas on which the right muscular action depends, are made to occur in proper form and order, with some degree of readiness, and the operation of course can be performed with some degree of facility. By continuing the repetition, the readiness of the ideas to occur, and the consequent facility of performing the operation, are increased. And if we still persevere, the ideas may not only occur without difficulty, but, on many occasions, even spontaneously, and, of course, make us apt, on those occasions, to perform the operation; in other words, beget a tendency or proneness



to the operation. Instances of this nature are happening continually. Hardly a day passes but we give way to actions to which we are habituated, although their performance is utterly unpremeditated.

In this example, the origin of the tendency to the operation, its increase, and mode of exercise, are all distinctly in our view, and plainly depend on the influence of volition, association, and congruity. Indeed, were it not for certain physiological mysteries connected with the body, and with which the philosophy of the mind has nothing to do, the whole machinery would be perfectly manifest.

7. The structure of common language, as well as the speculations of philosophers, shows that there is a very close analogy *conceived* to exist between the functions of the mind and those of the body; and the necessary consequence of this *conceived* analogy, whether well or ill founded, is, that when we perform any mental function, the laws of *association* and *congruity* should make us liable to perform the bodily function that is regarded as analogous to it. This accordingly is what actually happens. When we think of the *wide expansion* of any thing, we are exceedingly apt to *expand* some part of our body,—when we think of the *high elevation* of any thing, we are exceedingly apt to *elevate* some part of our body,—when we think of any thing as exerting great *energy*, we are exceedingly apt to put our body into something like an attitude of *energy*,—when *inclined* to any thing, we are exceedingly apt to make some movement of our body *towards* it,—when *averse* to any thing, we are exceedingly apt to make some movement

of our body *away from* it; and so on in a thousand other instances.

The parts of our body which we are apt to move on such occasions, I may remark, are those which happen for the moment to be in the view of the mind—whether the hands, the head, the features of the countenance, or any other part.

8. “During our stay at the Dardanelles,” says Dr Clarke, in his *Travels*, “we had lived in the house of the Neapolitan consul. This respectable old man put in force a stratagem, which may serve to show the extraordinary power of imagination over diseases of the body. The author, being troubled with an intermitting fever, brought on during the excursion in Troas, had been observed by him to go frequently to a clock, in the antichamber of our apartment, watching for the hour when the paroxysm was wont to begin. This had hitherto occurred exactly at noon. One morning he put back the clock a full hour. At twelve, therefore, as the index pointed to eleven, there was no apprehension of the fever; and at one, although the hour seemed to be present, the paroxysm did not take place. Unfortunately, pleased by the success of his experiment, he boasted of it, and the consequence was, that, after the usual interval, the fever again returned. In the same manner, all the charms used among the lower order of people in England, and in other countries, operate in healing agues. The tomb of Protesilaus, as related by Philostratus, was anciently resorted to for the cure of a quartan fever.”

Such cases, if the law of Congruity be admitted, present no difficulty. While the body is liable to a



particular disorder, the expectation of the disorder's taking place must have the effect to increase the tendency to make it actually take place; a contrary expectation must have a contrary effect, and the results, of course, be exactly as Dr Clarke states them.

I must repeat, however, an observation which I formerly made—that it is only the direct effects which I consider as produced by ideas according to the law of Congruity. The accessory and remote effects are the accompaniments and consequences of the direct ones, and require us to look to the physiology of the body for their explanation. When we experience any strong passion, for instance, a degree of tremor is sometimes felt for a considerable period after the passion has subsided; and this tremor, it is plain, cannot be accounted for by the direct influence of ideas, according to the law of Congruity; nor, in fact, by the direct influence of any thing mental whatever. Its direct cause seems clearly to be the state of the nerves, or some other influence that is purely corporeal. The same is the case with the changes of complexion, which the different passions induce. The paleness of fear, the redness of anger, the dull colour of melancholy, are manifestly not owing to any direct influence of the mind, but to processes, which, though primarily arising from the mind, are in their own nature entirely corporeal.

There seems no reason, however, to doubt that all the direct effects of the Motive Principle are produced by ideas, according to the law of Congruity; and that every other effect is either an appendage, or a more or less remote result of the direct ones. In as far as the mind is concerned, a tendency to any bodily

action seems obviously to be nothing but a tendency to a certain idea of the action, and the action then takes place as a matter of course. A tendency to move our hands, for example, in as far as the mind is concerned, is merely a tendency to certain ideas of their moving, and their motion then ensues; a tendency to move our feet, in as far as the mind is concerned, is merely a tendency to certain ideas of their moving, and their motion, too, then ensues; and so in all other cases. Ideas appear in every case to be the direct instruments, which the mind makes use of for executing its purposes. As it can *know* nothing without ideas, so it can *do* nothing without ideas. They are the only means of intercourse between it and every thing else; and as nothing can act on it without exciting them, so it can act on nothing without employing them.

#### SECT. VI.

##### *Deranged Effects—Insanity.*

Insanity arises both from the body and the mind; and notwithstanding the obscurity that seems to hang over the subject, it may be explained, I imagine, to some extent, with very little trouble.

1. Suppose that a person has his nerves of *sight* affected by some bodily distemper, in the same way as by outward objects; and it is evident, that he will think that he sees outward objects, and consequently be apt to speak and act as if he really saw them. In other words, he will discover very decided symptoms of a species of insanity; for, beyond all question, he,



who from bodily distemper, thinks that he sees things which have no existence, and speaks and acts as if he really saw them, is so far insane.

Cases of this kind are occurring continually. I have seen an individual so completely insane, in consequence of intoxication and exposure to cold, that he thought he saw objects at a considerable distance, though he was confined within the walls of an apartment not twelve feet square.

2. Suppose that a person has his nerves of *hearing* affected by some bodily distemper, in the same way as by outward objects; and it is as evident as in the former case, that he will think that he hears outward objects, and consequently will be apt to speak and act as if he really heard them. In other words, he will discover very decided symptoms of a different species of insanity.

Cases of this kind are also occurring continually. Some insane patients think that they hear very audible sounds, though every thing around them is perfectly silent. Some think that they hear sounds harmonious and cheerful; some that they hear sounds discordant and frightful; some that they hear sounds gloomy and depressing.

3. The same observations are applicable to the senses of *taste*, *smell*, and *touch*; and likewise to all our different *emotions*. The influence of bodily distemper may so affect the *whole*, or *any part* of the nervous system, as to occasion results which every one would pronounce to be marks of insanity. Let us now advert to the influence of the mind.

It has already been shown, that certain conceptions

of the mind have a tendency to make the body produce effects corresponding to them,—that certain conceptions of motion have a tendency to make the body perform the motion ; that certain conceptions of taste have a tendency to make the body excite the taste ; and so on. The consequences of this doctrine, in reference to insanity, are manifest.

1. If, while the nerves are in a state of ordinary excitability, a certain conception of the taste of savoury food has an influence to make the body produce a degree of the taste of that food ; it is evident, that were the excitability of the nerves augmented, the conception would make the body produce a higher degree of the taste ; and that were the excitability of the nerves sufficiently augmented, the conception would make the body produce such a degree of the taste, as would fully resemble that of the food itself. In this last case, however, would not the person feel as if he really experienced the taste of the food, and consequently be apt to speak and act as if he experienced it ? In other words, Would he not discover very decided symptoms of a species of insanity ?

2. " Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body," says Adam Smith, in a passage formerly quoted, " complain, that in looking on the ulcers which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the corresponding parts of their own bodies." Now, were the nerves of these persons in a state of sufficient excitability, would they not be apt to feel as if their bodies were really ulcerated, and consequently be apt to speak, and act, as if they were ulcerated ? In



other words, would they not discover decided symptoms of a different species of insanity?

3. The same observations are no less applicable to *sight, smell, and hearing*; and likewise to all our different *emotions*. The influence of the mind, as well as of the body, may so affect the whole, or any part of the nervous system,—particularly when in a state of considerable excitability,—as to occasion results which every one would pronounce to be marks of insanity.

If these observations be admitted, they seem fairly to warrant our embracing the following doctrine,—that insanity is never exclusively a mental disorder, but always results immediately from the connexion of the mind with the nerves of the body. Or, what amounts to the same thing, *that the proximate cause of insanity, whether it arise from the mind or the body, is a certain wrong affection of the nerves.*

As this doctrine, however, is of very considerable importance, it may not be proper to rest it entirely on the preceding observations, but to look to its consequences, and observe how they accord with the actual phenomena. The following are a few of its consequences.

1. The insanity which arises from the mind, must be *similar* to that which arises from the body. This is an obvious consequence; for if the proximate cause of the malady in both cases be similar—a certain wrong affection of the nerves—the malady itself must also be similar. This consequence accords with facts innumerable. So remarkably similar, indeed, is

the insanity which arises from the mind to that which arises from the body, that no person could determine from the symptoms alone, from which of the sources it originates.

2. If both the body and the mind occasion insanity, by producing a certain wrong affection of the nerves, it must happen, that the greater the power of the one to occasion the malady, the less power must be required from the other. This consequence is as obvious as the former, and it equally well agrees with facts. When the body has a considerable tendency to insanity, it is always found that a very slight degree of mental excitement is sufficient to induce it. Some people would be unhinged irrecoverably, by a passion that would leave others altogether uninjured. People, too, it is well known, who inherit an insane tendency from their ancestors, or who have contracted such a tendency from disease or other causes, have great need to avoid every passion that falls in with the tendency.

On the other hand, when the mind has great power to occasion insanity, a very slight tendency of the body is sufficient to induce it. Hence, some people would fall thoroughly prostrate before a violent passion, who could bear up with great ease under a moderate one. Certain passions, indeed, have such terrible energy,—remorse, for instance, in its more intense degrees,—as to be capable of laying prostrate almost the firmest constitutions.

Even after insanity is completely formed, the influence of different degrees of mental excitement is evident. If the mind of an insane patient be turned to



subjects that favour the operation of his malady, a paroxysm may be induced, which would otherwise have been avoided; and if turned to subjects of an opposite tendency, a paroxysm may be avoided, which would otherwise have been induced. Hence, few things are of more importance to the insane than *judicious moral treatment*.

3. Medicine may be useful in cases where insanity arises from the mind, as well as in cases where it arises from the body. This is as obvious a consequence as either of the former; for if the proximate cause of insanity be a certain wrong affection of the nerves, it is manifest, that in so far as medicine is able to alleviate or remove this wrong affection, it must be equally able to alleviate or remove the malady that results from it. Here, too, our reasoning accords with facts. A physician, as every person knows, would no more refuse his assistance because a passion of the mind had occasioned insanity, than a surgeon would refuse his assistance because a passion of the mind had occasioned a broken head.

The utility of medicine in cases of insanity—particularly in cases where it arises from the mind—may perhaps strike some as an argument against the mind's *immateriality*, as it may seem to indicate that the mind itself is acted on by medicine. But if the doctrine I have proposed be just, it is no argument at all; for though the mind be as spiritual as the most zealous *Immaterialist* could wish, the insanity which arises from the mind may be alleviated by medicine, as medicine may contribute to remove the wrong ner-

vous affection on which the malady immediately depends.

4. Insanity may be communicated by parents to their children. It is known to every one, that parents often communicate bodily distempers to their children—such as scrofula, scurvy, consumption, &c.—and their communicating that wrong affection of the nerves which immediately occasions insanity, is a fact of the same general character. The physiological process, indeed, by which the communication is effected, is altogether a mystery; but it is not a greater mystery than many other physiological processes—than the communication, for example, of red hair, or blue eyes, or a fair complexion; or even than the communication of legs and arms, or of the body itself.

Hereditary insanity, like the influence of medicine, may perhaps strike some as an argument against the mind's immateriality, as it may seem to indicate that the minds as well as the bodies of children are generated by their parents: but if the doctrine I have proposed be just, the one argument is as futile as the other; for if a wrong affection or condition of the nerves may be communicated by parents to their children, insanity may be communicated likewise, though the mind be ever so spiritual.\*

\* One of the strongest objections to the notion of *materialism*, is the decisive refutation that may be given to the most specious arguments in its favour. It would not be easy to mention any thing more apparently favourable to that notion, than the facts referred to in the text; and yet if the proximate cause of insanity be a wrong affection of the nerves—and there is every reason to



5. Insanity may exist without *weakening* the principles of the mind. This, too, is an obvious consequence; for though the wrong nervous affection which is the proximate cause of the malady, must greatly modify the *exercise* of our mental principles, it may nevertheless leave their *strength* unimpaired, and consequently suffer them to act with their customary vigour. Here also our reasoning agrees with facts. The insane, indeed, were once thought to be in some degree proof against certain sensations—such as sensations of cold—but it is now well known that they are as *sensitive* as other people: in some cases perhaps even more so. They are also as liable as other people to the influence of *association*. They soon come to stand in awe of their keepers, they rapidly acquire attachments and antipathies to the objects around them, and can even learn mechanical operations, which demand considerable nicety and skill. Nor are their old associations by any means dissolved. They can speak their native language, they can sing their favourite airs, they can engage, in some measure, in their customary trains of thought and of action. Even the most wild and fantastic of their aberrations are far from discovering any want of association, or any new principle of association. They merely discover the common principle operating in new circumstances. The person, for example, who ordered the door of his house to be enlarged, to admit the enormous bulk, to which he believed his body had expanded, showed no belief that it is so—they are the very facts that should be looked for, admitting the mind to be *purely spiritual*.

alteration in the associating principle whatever. A mere conception of the mind, acting on very excitable nerves, might easily give rise to the delusion that possessed him. And the same may be said of the person who believed he had the itch, and ordered all his servants to be stripped in his presence, that he might discover from whom he had received it: and so in a thousand other instances.

It is almost unnecessary to remark, that the *voluntary* and *motive* principles of the insane are unimpaired. The truth is, that far from discovering a diminution of the *strength* of any of their mental principles, the insane not unfrequently discover an increased and unnatural energy in them—a promptitude of judgment, a correctness of reasoning, and a quickness of observation, to which few of the most sound minds can make any pretensions.

It must be remembered, however, that insanity is often conjoined with other maladies; and that these must greatly modify its influence, and occasion results which it would not produce in its simple state.

6. The modifications of insanity may be indefinitely varied. This, likewise, is an obvious consequence; for, as the nerves of one sense may be under an insane affection, and not those of another, it must happen, if the doctrine I have proposed be just, that a person may be insane, in regard to one sense, and not insane in regard to another—may be insane, for example, in regard to the sense of *sight*, and not in regard to the sense of *touch*, or insane in regard to the sense of *touch*, and not in regard to the sense of *hearing*, &c. Such cases are often exemplified. The person already



mentioned, who thought he had the itch, could hear what was said to him as correctly as if he had been perfectly rational.

Again—As the nerves subservient to *emotions* may be under an insane affection, and not those subservient to *outward perceptions*, it must happen, if the doctrine I have proposed be just, that a person may be subject to insanity in regard to his *emotions*, and consequently in regard to his *dispositions, affections, and passions*, and not subject to insanity, in regard to his *outward perceptions*. Such cases, likewise, are often exemplified. Nothing, indeed, is better known than that there are persons whose outward perceptions are as correct as those of other people, but who, in consequence of their *interior feelings*, are deplorably insane. Even when the two forms of the malady act and react on each other, (as they often do,) it is frequently possible to distinguish the one from the other, or to discover which of them predominates.

Again—In consequence of particular associations, and other causes, some things may communicate a powerful excitement, and an insane affection to the nerves, while others inflict on them no injury whatever; and hence, some things may give rise to insanity, while others inflict no injury whatever; or, what amounts to the same thing, people may be insane on some subjects, and not insane on others. Cases of this kind are as often exemplified as either of the former. The insane, for example, not unfrequently think that they have received from particular individuals the most hurtful treatment, and furiously resent it, while they regard other individuals with composure and kindness.

A variety of other modifications of insanity might easily be mentioned, if its proximate cause be some wrong affection of the nerves. The preceding, however, may suffice as a specimen.

7. Errors of insanity must be different from errors of sense. Errors of sense are certainly occasioned by an affection of the nerves, and they are frequently so complete as to be mistaken for realities. A child, or a very ignorant person, may believe that there is actually something resembling himself behind the mirror, which shows him his own image. But such errors are never regarded as marks of insanity, but only of ignorance; and the reason is, they are not occasioned by any *wrong* affection of the nerves, but by outward circumstances, and they entirely vanish, or at least cease to mislead, as soon as the individual acquires adequate information. The errors of insanity are exceedingly different. They spring from a wrong affection of the nerves, and no information will prevent their misleading till that wrong affection be removed.

8. Errors of insanity must be different from errors of imagination. When people have their imaginations very powerfully excited, there cannot be a doubt that a considerable impression must be made on their nerves, and a kind of belief felt in the illusions they experience. But such belief is only for a moment. There is no reason to suppose that any force of imagination ever gives rise to a permanent illusion, unless the nerves sustain some injury. The great characteristic feature of insanity, however, is, that its illusions are abiding. The insane have a lasting con-



viction of the truth of their illusions, and consequently will not be persuaded that they are illusions at all.

Vividness of imagination, however, must be nearly allied to insanity. It depends very much, as I formerly showed, on the excitability of the nerves; and were the nerves only increased a little in excitability, imaginations might become as vivid as realities, and be mistaken for realities. Very imaginative people, I apprehend, are actually nearly allied to the insane.

It is unnecessary, however, for any purpose I have in view, to prosecute the subject of insanity any farther at present; and I shall only therefore remark, that both from theory and from facts, we seem fairly warranted to embrace the general doctrine I have proposed—that *whether insanity arise from the body or the mind, its proximate cause is always some wrong affection of the nerves.*

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I HAVE now finished all that I have to state at present respecting the more general principles of the mind. These, as I have mentioned, appear to be the *Sensitive*, the *Associating*, the *Voluntary*, and the *Motive* principles; and into these, I imagine, every phenomenon which properly belongs to the philosophy of the mind, whether *intellectual*, *active*, or *moral*, may be resolved. There are no doubt phenomena of a different nature which cannot be so easily explained. We may be asked, for example, What is the nature of that bodily organization which is requisite to the exercise of the above principles? What is its origin?

Is the same organization sufficient for them all? Or has each an organization adapted to itself? But these and other questions of similar import, hardly can be said to belong to the philosophy of the mind. They are no doubt connected with it, and their solution would throw considerable light on its phenomena; but they are rather *physiological* than *metaphysical*, and I fear are, in a great measure, beyond the reach of human sagacity.



## CONCLUSION.

THE slightest comparison of man with the lower animals, is sufficient to show his decided superiority over them; and in concluding this part of my speculations, I shall endeavour to point out the principle on which his superiority is founded.

This principle is plainly not the *Sensitive* principle; for, in regard to *sensitiveness*, many of the lower animals greatly surpass man. A hawk can see its prey where man could see nothing, and a hound can scent out its game where man could not know that any scent existed.

Neither is the *Associating* or the *Motive* principle the foundation of the superiority of man. The lower animals can obviously associate with great readiness: and as to *motiveness*, they frequently discover a degree of agility to which man can make no pretensions.

It remains, therefore, that if any of the general principles I have mentioned be the foundation of the superiority of man, it must be the *Voluntary one*: and here, I imagine, the superiority of man is incontestable. None of the lower animals seem to possess volition in any degree whatsoever. They have no doubt *desires*, and *affections*, and *passions*, and must therefore give way to exercises which *resemble* those of volition; but they are utterly destitute of the power of free agency,

a power which is of the very essence of volition, and without which, therefore, it cannot exist. But let us attend to the phenomena.

1. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must also be destitute of *self-government*. Now, every one is aware that the lower animals have no self-government. They merely *act* as they are *acted upon*, and are under the control of as *complete a necessity* as things inanimate.

2. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must also be destitute of the *obligations of morality*. No being can be susceptible of moral obligation that wants free agency. An action which a creature has not liberty either to perform or to decline performing, can never be imputed to it either for praise or blame. Every one allows that the lower animals are destitute of the obligations of morality.

3. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must also be destitute of *reason*. I formerly remarked, that the circumstances which direct us in the exercise of the Voluntary principle, when it is employed in controlling *belief*,\* are usually called *evidence*; that the circumstances which direct us in the exercise of the voluntary principle, when it is employed in controlling *actions*, are usually called *motives*; and that *reason* is the general term which applies equally to both. Hence, as I also remarked, we may say with the same propriety, that we have good *reason* for *believing* such a thing, and also good

\* See Note R.



*reason* for *doing* such a thing. In short, reason is not a distinct principle of the mind, but merely what is called the principle of knowledge or intelligence, *considered as affording information for the guidance of volition.*

If this be a just account of *reason*, it necessarily follows, that every creature that is destitute of volition must be destitute of *reason* likewise; and of course, that if the lower animals be without the former, they must also be without the latter. Every one knows that the lower animals are without *reason*. No person would ever attempt to convince them by *evidence*, or control them by *motives*. The want of rationality, indeed, is the most striking and characteristic feature which the lower animals discover, and is that from which they derive one of their most common designations. The *irrational animals* is an expression as commonly used as the *lower animals.*

4. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must also be destitute of *judgment*—understanding the term in its popular acceptance. Judgment, as commonly understood, is an act of *belief*, founded on some degree of *deliberation* or *attention*. Even when we speak of *judging* of colours by the *eye*, or of sounds by the *ear*, some exercise of *attention* is implied; for the colours and sounds which we speak of are always in some measure *attended to*. The exercise of *attention*, however, as formerly shown, is merely the exercise of the *Voluntary principle*, under a particular aspect; and whatever creature, therefore, is without the latter, must also be without the former, and consequently without *judgment.* Every

person knows, that the lower animals are without judgment. We may speak of a man's losing his judgment; but to speak of a beast's losing its judgment, would be deemed by every one a mere metaphor.

5. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must also be destitute of *abstraction*. The *Sensitive* and *Associating* principles of the mind, as I formerly remarked, may exhibit a variety of phenomena *resembling* abstractions; but without the Voluntary principle, there cannot, from the very nature of the case, be any abstractions *originating with the mind itself*, and, of course, there cannot be any abstractions properly so called; for it is only abstractions formed by the mind itself that, strictly speaking, go under the name. It is maintained by many philosophers, that the lower animals cannot abstract; and even those who have espoused a different opinion, are ready to admit, that they abstract very imperfectly. The imperfect abstractions which the latter speak of, are obviously nothing but the separations of ideas, which are sometimes effected by the *Sensitive* and *Associating* principles.

6. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must be very imperfectly able to make use of language. Some of the lower animals are capable of forming articulate sounds; and, by means of the *Associating* and *Motive* principles, ideas may be so connected with the articulation of these sounds, that whenever the ideas occur, the articulation will follow, and the sounds of course be uttered. In other words, the ideas will be expressed by the sounds. But a talent for speaking, derived from such a source,



must obviously be very limited. Unless a speaker have power to *select ideas* from a number of others, and likewise power to *select words* from a number of others, his speaking must be confined entirely to those cases of association, in which every thing is carried on by the influence of physical laws.

It is only necessary to look to the speech of the lower animals, to see that it is exactly of this character. It discovers not the slightest symptoms of *free agency*—of a power belonging to the animals themselves to *select* either words or ideas,—but is entirely the offspring of habits of association, derived from their manner of life, from accidental occurrences, or human training.

7. If the lower animals be destitute of the Voluntary principle, they must be very imperfectly able to adapt means to ends,—I mean, except in so far as their constitutional instincts are concerned. Such a talent, when possessed in any considerable degree, implies a power of *selecting* from a number of particulars, the circumstances which are fitted to accomplish the end, and also a power of *keeping the end in view*, while making the selection, and employing the means for its accomplishment. In other words, it implies the exercise of what I have called the Voluntary principle; and, of course, if the lower animals want this principle, they must also want this power of *selection*; and their ability to adapt means to ends, be exceedingly defective.

The slightest acquaintance with the lower animals is sufficient to show that their ability to adapt means to ends, is very defective. In consequence of habits

of association, derived from their manner of life, from accidental occurrences, or human training, they may occasionally surprise us by some feats of dexterity; but, if we except their constitutional instincts, their feats really amount to very little. A child of seven or eight years old discovers far more extensive and more varied resources, for adapting means to ends, than the most sagacious of the lower animals that ever existed.

It is utterly needless to mention other proofs of the doctrine I have stated. The smallest attention to the exercise of the Voluntary principle, seems sufficient to show, that it is here we are to look for the great characteristic difference between man and every other sublunary creature, and the source of that complete superiority over them which he so evidently possesses.

I acknowledge, indeed, that the Voluntary principle, when stated in its most elementary form—as the power of *detaining* ideas in the mind—has somewhat the appearance of being exceedingly simple and insignificant. But every principle of nature, when stated in its most elementary form, has such an appearance. The law of Gravitation, though it controls both the earth and the heavens, may be so stated as to strike the unintelligent as utterly unworthy of a moment's attention. In its consequences, the Voluntary principle is far from appearing insignificant. On the contrary, we find it modifying indefinitely every other principle of the human constitution, and giving rise to results of a nature the most important.



## **NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.**





## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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### Note A.

*THE Law of Correspondence*, it must be observed, gives us no knowledge of the part of the body on which an impression is made, —except, perhaps, in some peculiar circumstances. The learned and ingenious author of the article on *Metaphysics*, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, remarks, that “every man must have observed that children, previous to experience, cannot distinguish the precise place of their bodies which is affected by the touch of any external object. Nay, we believe it will be found upon trial, that if a full-grown man, with all the experience of age to guide him, be pricked with a pin on any part of his body which he has seldom handled, and never seen, he will not readily, nor at first put his finger on the wound, nor even come very *near* to the wound.”

These facts, however, are not urged as an objection to the Law of Correspondence ; and, in reality, they are a strong confirmation of it, for they are the very facts which the law would lead us to expect. Thus, when an impression is made on the back of the head, it does not make known to us that the back of the head is the part affected ; for it does not make known that we have a head at all. It merely makes known a *sensation*, and an idea of *extension* corresponding to the portion of nervous expansion on which the impression is produced.

## Note B.

Dr Brown, in his *Tenth Lecture*, has stated with great propriety the *seeming complexity* which our ideas often exhibit. "Since the phenomena of mind," says he, "are *obviously successive*, like those of matter, the consideration of the sequences of the mental phenomena, and the arrangement of them in certain classes, may appear to you sufficiently analogous to the consideration and arrangement of the sequences of the phenomena of the material world. But that there should be any inquiries, in the philosophy of mind, corresponding with the inquiries into the *composition* of bodies, may appear to you improbable, or almost absurd; since the mind, and consequently its *affections*—which I use as a short general term for expressing all the variety of modes in which it can be affected, and which, therefore, are only the mind itself as it exists in different states,—must be always *simple* and *indivisible*. Yet, wonderful, or even absurd, as it may seem,—notwithstanding the absolute simplicity of the mind itself, and consequently of all its feelings or momentary states,—the Science of Mind is, in its most important respects, a source of analysis, or of a process which I have said to be *virtually* the same as analysis; and it is only as it is in this virtual sense *analytical*, that any discovery, at least that any important discovery, can be expected to be made in it.

"It is, indeed, scarcely possible to advance even a single step, in intellectual physics, without the necessity of performing some sort of analysis, by which we reduce to simpler elements some complex feeling that *seems* to us virtually to involve them. In the mind of man, all is in a state of constant and ever-varying complexity, and a single sentiment may be the slow result of innumerable feelings. There is not a single pleasure, or pain, or thought, or emotion, that may not,—by the influence of that associating principle, which is afterwards to come under consideration,—be so connected with other *pleasures*, or *pains*, or *thoughts*, or *emotions*, as to form with them, for ever after, an union the most intimate. The complex, or *seemingly complex*, phenomena of thought, which result from the constant operation of this principle of the mind, it is the labour of the intellectual inquirer to *analyze*, as it is the labour of the chemist to reduce the compound bodies, on which he operates, however close and intimate

their combinations may be, to their constituent elements. The process and the instruments by which the analyses are carried on, are, indeed, as different as matter is from mind,—cumbrous as matter, in the one case; in the other, simple and spiritual as mind itself. The aggregates of *matter* we analyze by the use of other matter, adding substance after substance, and varying manipulation after manipulation;—the complex mental phenomena we analyze virtually by mere reflection, the same individual mind being the *subject* of analysis, the instrument, and the analyzing inquirer.

“ When I speak, however, of the union of separate thoughts and feelings in one complex sentiment or emotion, and of the *analytic* power of reflection or reason, it must not be conceived, that I use these words in a sense *precisely the same* as when they are applied to matter. A *mass of matter*, as we have seen, is, in truth, not one body merely, but a *multitude* of contiguous bodies; all of which, at the time, may be considered as having a separate existence, and as placed together more by accidental apposition, than by any essential union;—and analysis is nothing more than what its etymology denotes, a *loosening* of these from each other. In strictness of language, *this composition and analysis* cannot take place in *mind*. Even the most *complex* feeling is still only *one* feeling; for we cannot divide the states or affections of our mind into separate self-existing *fractions*, (as we can divide a compound mass of matter,) which are separate and self-existing,—nor distinguish *half* a joy or sorrow from a *whole* joy or sorrow. The conception of *gold*, and the conception of a *mountain*, may separately arise, and may be followed by the conception of a *golden mountain*; which may be said to be a *compound* of the two, in the sense in which I use that word, to express merely, that what is thus termed compound or complex, *is the result* of certain previous feelings, *to which, as if existing together, it is felt to have the virtual relation of equality*, or the relation which a whole bears to the parts that are comprehended in it. But the conception of a *golden mountain* is still as much *one* state or feeling of one simple mind, as either of the separate conceptions of gold and of a mountain which preceded it. In cases of this kind, indeed, it is the very nature of the resulting feeling, to *seem* to us thus complex; and we are led, by the very constitution of our mind itself, to consider what we term a complex idea, as *equivalent* to the separate ideas.



from which it results, or as comprehensive of them,—as being truly to our conception—though to our conception only—and, therefore, only virtually or relatively to us the inquirers—the same, as if it were *composed* of the separate feelings coexisting, as the elements of a body *coexist in space*.

“ It is this feeling of the relation of certain states of mind to certain other states of mind, which solves *the whole mystery of mental analysis*, that seemed at first so inexplicable,—the *virtual decomposition*, in our thought, of what is, by its very nature, *indivisible*. The mind, indeed, it must be allowed, is absolutely simple in all its states; every separate state or affection of it must, therefore, be absolutely simple; but in certain cases, in which a feeling is the result of other feelings preceding it, it is its very nature to *appear* to involve the *union* of these preceding feelings; and to distinguish the separate sensations, or thoughts, or emotions, of which, on reflection, it thus seems to be comprehensive, is to perform an *intellectual process*, which, though not a *real analysis*, is an analysis at least *relatively to our conception*. It may still, indeed, be said with truth, that the different feelings,—the states or affections of mind which we term *complex*, are absolutely *simple* and *indivisible*, as much as the feelings or affections of mind which we term simple. Of this there can be no doubt. But the complexity with which alone we are concerned, is not *absolute* but *relative*,—a *seeming* complexity, which is involved in every feeling of relation of every sort. That we are thus impressed with certain feelings of relation of conceptions to conceptions, no one can doubt who knows, that all science has its origin in these very feelings; and *equivalence*, or *equality*, is one of those relations, which, from its very constitution, it would be as impossible for the mind, in certain circumstances, *not* to feel; as it would be impossible for it, in certain other circumstances, *not* to have those simple feelings which it compares. With perfect organic vision, and in the full light of day, it is not possible for us to look on a tree, or a rock, without perceiving it; but it is not *more* possible for us to form a conception of two trees, without regarding this state of mind, *simple though it truly is, when absolutely considered*, as *virtually involving*, or as *equal* to, two of those separate feelings, which constituted the conception of a single tree.

“ On this mere feeling of virtual equivalence, is founded all

the demonstration of those sciences, which claim the glory of being peculiarly demonstrative; our equations and proportions of abstract number and quantity, involving continually this analytic valuation of notions, as *reciprocally* proportional. Our conception of an angle of forty-five degrees, is *one* state or affection of mind,—one state of one simple indivisible substance,—such, too, is our conception of a right angle. Our notion of *four* or *eight* is as much *one* affection of mind, as our notion of a simple unit. But, in reflecting on the separate states of mind which constitute these notions, we are impressed with certain relations, which they seem to us reciprocally to bear; and we consider the angle of forty-five degrees, as equal to half the angle of ninety degrees; and our notion of eight, as involving or equal to two of four. If *one* state of mind, which constitutes the notion of a certain abstract number or quantity, *had not* been considered in this sort of virtual comprehensiveness, as bearing the relation of *equality*, or proportion, to other states of mind, which constitute other abstract notions of the same species, mathematics would not merely have lost their certainty; but there could not, in truth, have been any such science as mathematics.

“The *intellectual analysis*, which appears to me to constitute so important a part of the science of mind, is nothing more than the successive developement, in application to the various mental phenomena, of *this feeling of equivalence*, or *comprehensiveness*, which is not confined to the mathematical notions of *number* and *quantity*, (though, from the greater simplicity of these, their equality or proportion may be more accurately distinguished,) but extended to *every thought and feeling which we regard as complex*; that is to say, to almost every thought and feeling of which the mind is susceptible. We compare *virtue* with *virtue*, *talent* with *talent*, not, indeed, with the same precision, but certainly in the same manner, and with the same feeling of proportion, as we compare intellectually *one* angle with *another*; and we ask, What ideas are involved in our complex notions of *religion* and *government*, with as strong a feeling that a number of ideas are virtually involved or comprehended in them, as when we ask, How often the square of two is repeated in the cube of six.

“Analysis, then, in the Science of Mind, you will perceive, is founded wholly on the feeling of relation which one state of mind



seems to us to bear to other states of mind, as comprehensive of them ; but, while this seeming complexity is felt, it is the same thing to our analysis, as if the complexity, instead of being virtual and relative only, were absolute and real. It may be objected to the application of the term *analysis* to the Science of Mind, that it is a term, which its etymology shows, as I have already admitted, to be borrowed from matter, and to convey, as applied to the mind, a notion in some degree different from its etymological sense. But this is an objection which may be urged, with at least equal force, against every term, or almost every term, of our science. In our want of a peculiar metaphysical language, we are obliged in this, as in every other case, to borrow a metaphysical language from the material world ; and we are very naturally led to speak of mental *composition* and *analysis*, since, to the mind which feels the relation of equivalence or comprehensiveness, it is precisely the same thing as if our ideas and emotions, that result from former ideas and emotions, and are felt by us as if involving these in one complex whole, could be actually divided into the separate elements which appear to us thus virtually or relatively to be comprehended in them." \*

#### Note C.

"Man is placed," says Dr Brown, in his *Fourteenth Lecture*, "as it has been truly said, on a point, between two infinities,—the infinitely *great*, and the infinitely *little*. It may be an extravagant speculation, to which I have before alluded,—but it is not *absolutely absurd*, to suppose, that in the unbounded system of nature, there may be beings, to whose vision the whole planetary attendants of each separate sun, which to us appear to revolve at distances so immense, may yet seem but *one small cohesive mass*,—in the same manner, as to those animalculæ, whose existence and successive generations had been altogether unknown to man, till the microscope *created* them, as it were, to his feeble sight,—and which, perhaps, are mighty *animals* compared with races of beings still more minute, that are constantly living in our presence, and

\* See Note D.



yet destined never to be known to us,—those bodies, which to us seem one small cohesive mass, may appear separated by distances, *relatively as great, as to us are those of the planets.* That light, *itself a body*, should pass freely through a mass of solid crystal, is regarded by us as a sort of physical wonder; and yet it is far from impossible, that between the atoms which compose this apparently solid mass, whole nations of living beings may be dwelling, and exercising their mutual works of peace or hostility; while, perhaps, if philosophy can be exercised, in brains of such infinitesimal dimensions, in the same manner as in our coarser organs, the nature of the atoms or distant worlds around them, may be dividing, with endless absurdities, the Ptolemies and Aristotles of the little republics. We have all so much of the nature of the inhabitants of Brobdignag, that a supposition of this kind,—which is, perhaps, truly in itself not a very probable one,—yet appears to us much *more* improbable than it really is. We smile, as recognising our own nature, when the sovereign of that country of giants is represented by the most unfortunate, or rather the most fortunate, of all voyagers, as “turning to his first minister, who waited behind him with a white staff, near as tall as the mainmast of the Royal Sovereign, and observing how contemptible a thing was human grandeur, which could be mimicked by such insects. ‘And yet,’ said he, ‘I dare engage, those creatures have their titles and distinctions of honour; they contrive their nests and burrows, that they call houses and cities; they make a figure in dress and equipage; they love, they fight, they dispute, they cheat, they betray.’” And we fully enter into the difficulty which the *Savans* of the country, who had all agreed that the new-discovered animal could not have been produced according to the regular laws of nature, must have found in giving him a name. “One of them seemed to think that I might be an embryo, or abortive birth. But this opinion was rejected by the other two, who observed my limbs to be perfect and finished, and that I had lived several years, as was manifest from my beard, the stumps whereof they plainly discovered through a magnifying glass. They would not allow me to be a dwarf, because my littleness was beyond all degrees of comparison; for the queen’s favourite dwarf, the smallest ever known in that kingdom, was near thirty feet high. After much debate, they concluded unanimously, that I

was only *replum scalath*, which is interpreted literally *lusus naturæ*; a determination exactly agreeable to the modern philosophy of Europe, whose professors, disdaining the old evasion of occult causes, whereby the followers of Aristotle endeavoured in vain to disguise their ignorance, have invented this wonderful solution of all difficulties, to the unspeakable advancement of human knowledge."

#### Note D.

Dr Brown, in his *Fifth Lecture*, has stated, with great distinctness, the relation of *matter* to *time* and *space*. "We may consider matter," says he, "simply as it exists in *space*, or as it exists in *time*. Any substance considered as it exists in *space*, is the mere name which ourselves give to the coexistence of a multitude of bodies, similar in nature, or dissimilar, in apparent continuity; considered as it exists in *time*, it is that which is affected by the prior changes of other bodies, or which itself produces a change of some sort in other bodies. As it exists in *space*, therefore, we inquire into its *composition*; or, in other words, endeavour to discover what are the elementary bodies that coexist in the *space* which it occupies; and that are all which we truly consider, when we think that we are considering the compound as one distinct body. As it exists in *time*, we inquire into its *susceptibilities* or its *powers*; or, in other words, endeavour to trace all the series of prior and subsequent changes, of which its presence forms an intermediate link."

The relation of *ideas* to *time* is also stated by Dr Brown, in different parts of his writings, with much distinctness; but the relation of *ideas* to *space* he has stated very vaguely, or rather, he has spoken as if they never seemed to have any relation to space at all. This, however, is certainly a mistake. Does not the appearance of colour, (not to mention other examples,) though allowed by every one to be merely an *idea*, seem to be conjoined with the coloured object?

Our ideas, it is true, are often in the highest degree faint and volatile; but even in these cases, I imagine, they have a *seeming existence* in space, although their seeming existence in any particular part of it may be only for a moment. It would strike an ordinary person, indeed, as almost a flat contradiction to be told,



that an idea—or any thing whatsoever—may exist, and yet exist *no where*.

Perhaps, however, it may be thought, that if ideas *seem* to exist in space, they must do so in reality, and consequently have an *actual* existence in it. The same remark may be applied to their *seeming extension* and *seeming complexity*, for all these particulars are inseparably connected; and hence, it may be inferred, that the mind, to which ideas belong, must be *extended, complex, and an occupant of space*.

These, however, are by no means legitimate inferences, and were they embraced, would involve the subject in ten thousand times more mystery than ever; for, let us attend to the consequences. I stand on the summit of a lofty mountain, and obtain, by sight, an idea or appearance of colour, which *seems* to be extended over the prodigious expanse which is before me. Is this idea only *apparently* extended, or is it really so? If only *apparently* extended, we have all the evidence which the case will admit, that in every instance the extension of our ideas is only apparent. But if really extended, where, I would ask, is this extended idea contained? Admitting that the mind is not only extended, but extended over the whole body,—and surely no materialist will require a more liberal admission,—yet how can a being, extended only *a few feet*, contain an idea which is *diffused over several hundred square miles*? It is of no use to allege, that the idea is not *original*, but *acquired*; for the difficulty is the same in either case; neither will it avail to allege that its different parts may be received into the mind *in succession*; for if it be what it seems, the whole is in the mind *at the same instant*. Neither will it remove the difficulty to insinuate, that perhaps the idea may be *rolled* or *folded up* in the mind; and that, being of very fine texture, it may be crammed into a small compass; for if it be what it seems, it is not *folded up*, but *spread out*. In short, the materialist has no other way to avoid the most egregious absurdities, than to maintain, not only that the mind is extended over the whole body, but that it possesses the wonderful faculty of sallying out of the body altogether, and *diffusing* itself over every portion of extension, which falls under its observation.

And here I cannot help remarking, that the phenomena of nature, when rightly considered, often give the most decisive sup-



port to principles, which, at first sight, they seem to threaten with complete subversion. The *ascent* of smoke, for instance, appears at first sight to be utterly contrary to the law of gravitation; and yet, when duly considered, it is one of the most interesting examples of that law. The existence of double tides in the ocean appears, at first sight, to be utterly contrary to the moon's attraction; and yet, when duly considered, it is one of the most interesting examples of that attraction. And, in like manner, the *seeming extension* and *seeming complexity* of ideas, and their *seeming to occupy space*, appear, at first sight, to be utterly contrary to the mind's spirituality; and yet, when duly considered, it will be found, I am persuaded, by every competent judge, to be one of the most interesting proofs of its spirituality which it is possible to obtain.

#### Note E.

The nature of causation may be stated more particularly than in the text, as follows:—

1. A cause is something, *after* which some other thing has taken place. When two things happen at the same instant, the one is never styled the cause of the other. Even what are styled *final causes*, are things, *after* which other things take place. A final cause is the *design* which a person has in view in doing something, and of course must exist *before* he does it.

2. A cause is something, after which, *though nothing else had been*, (if we except preliminary conditions,) some other thing had taken place. An object is never deemed the cause of any thing, unless—with the exception of preliminary conditions—it include every thing requisite to its taking place. It may sometimes, indeed, be denominated its cause, as we often speak loosely and incorrectly; but, in strictness of speech, it cannot be regarded as the *full* cause, but only a *partial* one.

3. Some, perhaps, would consider a third ingredient as included in a cause—its being something, *without* which some other thing had not taken place. A person, for example, feels a sensation of heat, and finds that it takes place *after* the presence of fire, the presence of a table, the presence of books, the presence of chairs,

&c., and yet the fire *alone* is regarded as the cause of his sensation ; and the reason seems to be, that it is something *without* which he had not felt the sensation, while without the other articles he would have felt it.

This particular, however, I imagine, is not an ingredient in causation, but merely a consequence of its operation, according to the present constitution of nature. If it be insisted on, however, as an ingredient, a cause may be defined thus :—*Something after which some other thing has taken place, besides which, though nothing else had been, (if we except preliminary conditions,) it had taken place, and without which it had not taken place.*

Note F.

It may be proper to mention, that it is only by *experience* we can discover what objects and actions are consistent, according to the constitution of nature ; and also what objects and actions are inconsistent, according to the constitution of nature. Independently of all experience, any object, for aught we know, may be consistent with any action whatever. This is well stated by Hume in one of his Essays.

“ I shall venture to affirm,” says Hume, “ as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasoning *a priori* ; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities, if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water, that it would suffocate him ; or from the light and warmth of fire, that it would consume him. No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it ; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.”



“ This proposition, *that causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason, but by experience*, will readily be admitted with regard to such objects as we remember to have once been altogether unknown to us ; since we must be conscious of the utter inability which we then lay under, of foretelling what would arise from them. Present two smooth pieces of marble to a man who has no tincture of natural philosophy ; he will never discover that they will adhere together in such a manner as to require great force to separate them in a direct line, while they make so small a resistance to a lateral pressure. Such events as bear little analogy to the common course of nature, are also readily confessed to be known only by experience ; nor does any man imagine that the explosion of gunpowder, or the attraction of a loadstone, could ever be discovered by arguments *a priori*. In like manner, when an effect is supposed to depend upon an intricate machinery or secret structure of parts, we make no difficulty in attributing all our knowledge of it to experience. Who will assert, that he can give the ultimate reason, why milk or bread is proper nourishment for a man, not for a lion or tiger ?

“ But the same truth may not appear at first sight to have the same evidence with regard to events, which have become familiar to us from our first appearance in the world, which bear a close analogy to the whole course of nature, and which are supposed to depend on the simple qualities of objects, without any secret structure of parts. We are apt to imagine, that we could discover these effects by the mere operation of our reason, without experience. We fancy, that were we brought on a sudden into this world, we could at first have inferred, that one billiard-ball would communicate motion to another upon impulse ; and that we needed not to have waited for the event, in order to pronounce with certainty concerning it. Such is the influence of custom, that, where it is strongest, it not only covers our natural ignorance, but even conceals itself, and seems not to take place, merely because it is found in the highest degree.

“ But to convince us, that all the laws of nature, and all the operations of bodies, without exception, are known only by experience ; the following reflections may perhaps suffice. Were any object presented to us, and we were required to pronounce concerning the effect which will result from it, without consulting



past observation; after what manner, I beseech you, must the mind proceed in this operation? It must invent, or imagine, some event which it ascribes to the object as its effect; and it is plain that this invention must be entirely arbitrary. The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. Motion, in the second billiard-ball, is a quite distinct event from motion in the first; nor is there any thing in the one to suggest the smallest hint of the other. A stone, or piece of metal raised into the air, and left without any support, immediately falls. But, to consider the matter *a priori*, is there any thing in this situation which can beget the idea of a downward, rather than an upward, or any other motion, in the stone or metal?

“And as the first imagination or invention of a particular effect, in all natural operations, is arbitrary, where we consult not experience; so must we also esteem the supposed tie or connexion between the cause and effect which binds them together, and renders it impossible, that any other effect could result from the operation of that cause. When I see, for instance, a billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another, even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me as the result of their contact or impulse, may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? All our reasonings, *a priori*, will never be able to show us any foundation for this preference.

“In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause; and the first invention or conception of it, *a priori*, must be entirely arbitrary. And even after it is suggested, the conjunction of it with the cause must appear equally arbitrary; since there are always many other effects, which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural. In vain, therefore, should we pretend to de-

termine any single event, or infer any cause or effect, without the assistance of observation and experience.

“Hence we may discover the reason, why no philosopher, who is rational and modest, has ever pretended to assign the ultimate cause of any natural operation, or to show distinctly the action of that power, which produces any single effect in the universe. It is confessed, that the utmost effort of human reason is, to reduce the principles productive of natural phenomena to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes, by means of reasonings from analogy, experience, and observation. But as to the causes of these general causes, we should in vain attempt their discovery; nor shall we ever be able to satisfy ourselves by any particular explication of them. These ultimate springs and principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and inquiry. Elasticity, gravity, cohesion of parts, communication of motion by impulse; these are probably the ultimate causes and principles which we shall ever discover in nature; and we may esteem ourselves sufficiently happy, if, by accurate inquiry and reasoning, we can trace up the particular phenomena to, or near to, these general principles. The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer; as perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it. Thus the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us, at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it.

“Nor is geometry, when taken into the assistance of natural philosophy, ever able to remedy this defect, or lead us into the knowledge of ultimate causes, by all that accuracy of reasoning for which it is so justly celebrated. Every part of mixed mathematics proceeds upon the supposition, that certain laws are established by nature in her operations; and abstract reasonings are employed, either to assist experience in the discovery of these laws, or to determine their influence in particular instances, where it depends upon any precise degree of distance or quantity. Thus, it is a law of motion, discovered by experience, that the moment or force of any body in motion is in the compound ratio or proportion of its solid contents and its velocity; and consequently, that a small force may remove the greatest obstacle, or raise the



greatest weight, if by any contrivance or machinery we can increase the velocity of that force, so as to make it an overmatch for its antagonist. Geometry assists us in the application of this law, by giving us the just dimensions of all the parts and figures which can enter into any species of machine; but still the discovery of the law itself is owing merely to experience; and all the abstract reasonings in the world could never lead us one step toward the knowledge of it. When we reason *a priori*, and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect; much less show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them. A man must be very sagacious, who could discover by reasoning, that crystal is the effect of heat, and ice of cold, without being previously acquainted with the operation of these qualities."

Note G.

If the doctrine be admitted, that *power* is the *consistency* of the *being* of things with *their performing actions*, we may easily explain a variety of facts which many philosophers are disposed to regard as ultimate truths, and consequently as incapable of explanation.

1. How comes it to pass, that though the common people believe that an object's performing an action is a proof of its possessing power, yet that its possessing power is no proof of its performing the action? This question is easily answered. An object's performing an action implies, in the very nature of the case, the *consistency* of the action with the being of the object; but the being of the object certainly does not imply the action's being performed. If a horse draw a ton weight, his doing so implies, in the very nature of the case, the *consistency* of the action with his being; but surely his being does not imply his drawing that weight.

2. How comes it to pass that the common people believe that, in many cases, they perceive the powers of things external *with their very eyes*? This question is also easily answered. They perceive, in many cases, with their very eyes, the *consistency* of



things external with their performing various actions. At least they perceive this with their eyes as much as they perceive the external things themselves. In both cases, indeed, there are certain previous habits of association requisite; but in both cases these previous habits are unknown to the common people, and are consequently overlooked by them.

3. How comes it to pass that the common people believe that power is not a *substance*, but something *connected* with substances? This question is also easily answered. If power be the *consistency* of the being of things with their performing actions, it is in reality not a substance, but something connected with substances—it is a relation between substances and actions.

4. How comes it to pass that the common people do not conclude the *want* of power from its not being exerted? This question too is easily answered. It may be quite *consistent* with the being of an object to perform certain actions, although it do not in reality perform them. Its not performing them, therefore, does not imply the want of that *consistency*.

5. How comes it to pass that the common people believe that no object can perform an action when it wants the *power* of performing it? This is merely to believe that no object can perform an action when it would be *inconsistent* with its being to perform it.

6. How comes it to pass that the powers of things can be learned only by *experience*? This question, like all the preceding, may be answered with great ease. We know nothing of the constitution of nature but by experience; and, of course, we can know nothing of the *consistency* of the being of things with their performing actions according to that constitution, but by experience.

The same observations apply with equal propriety to the *susceptibilities* of things. These qualities indeed—if qualities they may be called, for they are merely *relations*—are complete counterparts of *powers*, and, *mutatis mutandis*, may be explained in the same way.\*

\* The reason why the *susceptibilities* of things are apt to be regarded as *qualities* rather than *relations* is evidently this. When we think of an object as *receiving an effect*, the idea of the object and the idea of the *act of receiving*, are so intimately connected in the mind, as to seem completely blended with

## Note H.

Bishop Horsley, in his sermon on these words of the Evangelist Matthew, "*From that time forth, began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,*" expresses himself as follows: "The form of expression here is very remarkable in the original; and it is well preserved in our English translation. He *must* go—he *must* suffer—he *must* be killed—he *must* be raised again on the third day,—all these things are fixed and determined—must inevitably be—nothing could prevent them; and yet the greater part of them were of a kind that might seem to depend entirely on *man's* free agency. To go or not to go to Jerusalem was in his own power; and the persecution he met with there, arising from the folly and malice of ignorant and wicked men, surely depended upon human will; yet, by the form of the sentence, these things are included under the same necessity of event as that which was evidently an immediate effect of divine power, without the concurrence of any other cause, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The words which in the original express the *going*—the *suffering*—the *being killed*—the *being raised again*—are all equally subject to the verb which answers to the word *must* of our language, and in its first and proper meaning predicates necessity. As he *must* be raised on the third day, so he *must* go, he *must* suffer, he *must* be killed. Every one of these

each other, and the latter idea, being the subordinate one, appears as an attribute of the former. The same remark applies to the *powers* of things. When we think of an object as producing an effect, the idea of the object and the idea of the act of producing, are so intimately connected in the mind, as to seem completely blended with each other, and the latter idea, being the subordinate one, appears as an attribute of the former.

Such *blending* or *intermingling* of ideas is to be met with everywhere in the phenomena of mind, and it is the source of many of the most interesting, but, at the same time, most perplexing inquiries which the metaphysician has to engage in. In fact, could we once resolve such combinations of ideas into their simple elements, the philosophy of the mind would speedily be advanced to a state of comparative perfection.



events, his going to Jerusalem, his suffering, and his death there,—and that these sufferings and that death should be brought about by the malice of the elders, and chief priests, and Scribes,—every one of these things is plainly announced, as no less unalterably fixed than the resurrection of our Saviour, or the time of his resurrection—that it was to happen on the third day.

“The previous certainty of things to come is one of those truths which are not easily comprehended. The difficulty seems to arise from a habit that we have of measuring all intellectual powers by the standard of human intellect. There is nothing in the nature of certainty, abstractedly considered, to connect it with past time or with the present, more than with the future; but human knowledge extends in so small a degree to future things, that scarce any thing becomes certain to *us* till it come to pass; and therefore we are apt to imagine that things *acquire* their certainty *from* their accomplishment. But this is a gross fallacy. The proof of an event to *us* always depends either upon the testimony of others, or the evidence of our own senses; but the certainty of events in themselves arises from their natural connexion with their proper causes. Hence to that great Being who knows things—not by testimony—not by sense, but by their causes, as being himself the first cause, the source of power and activity to all other causes,—to Him, every thing that shall ever be, is at all times infinitely more certain than any thing that is either past or present can be to any man, except, perhaps, the simple fact of his own existence, and some of those necessary truths which are evidenced to every man, not by his bodily senses, but by that internal perception, which seems to be the first act of created intellect.

“This certainty, however, is to be carefully distinguished from a true *necessity* inherent in the nature of the thing. A thing is *necessary* when the idea of its existence is included in the idea of the thing as an inseparable part of it. Thus, God is necessary;—the mind cannot think of him at all without thinking of him as existent. The very notion and name of an *event* excludes this necessity, which belongs only to things uncaused. The events of the created universe are *certain*, because sufficient causes *do*, not because they *must*, act to their production. God *knows* this certainty, because he knows the action of all these causes; inasmuch as he himself begins it, and perfectly comprehends those mutual

connexions between the things he hath created, which render *this* a cause, and *that* its effect.

“ But the mere certainty of things to come, including in it even human actions, is not all that is implied in the terms of our Lord’s prediction ; which plainly intimate, that the actions of men, even their worst actions, are in some measure comprised in the design of Providence, who, although he wills not the evil of any single act, undoubtedly wills the good in which the whole system of created agency shall ultimately terminate.” \* \* \* \* \*

“ The proof of our liberty is to every individual of the human race the very same, I am persuaded, with the proof of his existence. I *feel* that I *exist*, and I *feel* that I am *free* ; and I may with reason turn a deaf ear upon every argument that can be alleged in either case to disprove my feelings. I feel that I have power to flee the danger that I dread—to pursue the pleasure that I covet—to forego the most inviting pleasure, although it be actually within my grasp, if I apprehend that the present enjoyment may be the means of future mischief—to expose myself to present danger, to submit to present evils, in order to secure the possession of future good ;—I feel that I have power to do the action I approve—to abstain from another that my conscience would condemn ;—in a word, I feel that I act from my own hopes, my own internal perceptions of moral fitness and incongruities. Happy, thrice happy, they who act invariably by these perceptions ! They have attained to the ‘ glorious liberty of the sons of God ! ’ But whenever I act from other motives, I feel that I am misled by my own passions, my own appetites, my own mistaken views of things. A feeling always succeeds these unreasonable actions, that, had my mind exerted its natural powers, in considering the action I was about to do—the propriety of it in itself and its consequences, I might and I should have acted otherwise. Having these feelings, I feel all the liberty which renders the morality of a man’s actions properly his own, and makes him justly accountable for his conduct.

“ The liberty, therefore, of man, and the foreknowledge and providence of God, are equally certain, although the proof of each rests on different principles. Our feelings prove to every one of us that we are free ; reason and revelation teach us, that the Deity knows and governs all things,—that even the ‘ thoughts of man



he understandeth long before,\* long before the thoughts arise—long before the man himself is born who is to think them. Now, when two distinct propositions are separately proved, each by its proper evidence, it is not a reason for denying either, that the human mind, upon the first hasty view, imagines a repugnance, and may, perhaps, find a difficulty in connecting them, even after the distinct proof of each is clearly perceived and understood. There is a wide difference between a paradox and a contradiction. Both, indeed, consist of two distinct propositions; and so far only are they alike; for, of the two parts of a contradiction, the one or the other must necessarily be false,—of a paradox, both are often true, and yet, when proved to be true, may continue paradoxical. This is the necessary consequence of our partial views of things. An intellect, to which nothing should be paradoxical, would be infinite. It may naturally be supposed that paradoxes must abound the most in metaphysics and divinity; ‘for who can find out God unto perfection?’ Yet they occur in other subjects; and any one who should refuse his assent to propositions separately proved—because when connected they may seem paradoxical—would, in many instances, be justly laughed to scorn by the masters of those sciences, which make the highest pretensions to certainty and demonstration. In all these cases, there is generally in the nature of things a limit to each of the two contrasted propositions, beyond which neither can be extended without implying the falsehood of the other, and changing the paradox into a contradiction; and the whole difficulty of perceiving the connexion and agreement between such propositions arises from this circumstance, that, by some inattention of the mind, these limits are overlooked. Thus, in the case before us, we must not imagine such an arbitrary exercise of God’s power over the minds and will of subordinate agents, as should convert rational beings into mere machines, and leave the Deity charged with the follies and the crimes of men; \* \* \* nor must we, on the other hand, set up such a liberty of created beings, as, necessarily precluding the Divine foreknowledge of human actions, should take the government of the moral world out of the hands of God, and leave him nothing to do with the noblest part of his creation.” \* \* \*

“There is yet another error upon this subject, which, I think, took its rise among professed infidels; and to them, till of late, it

hath been entirely confined. But some have appeared among its modern advocates, actuated, I am persuaded, (for their writings on this subject witness it,) by the same humble spirit of resigned devotion which gave birth to the plan of arbitrary predestination.\* Deeply versed in physics, these men wish to reconcile the notion of God's arbitrary dominion\* with the regular operation of second causes; and in this circumstance lies the chief, if not the whole difference, between the philosophical necessity of our subtle moderns, and the predestination of their more simple ancestors. And so far as these Necessarians maintain the certain influence of moral motives, as the natural and sufficient means whereby human actions, and even human thoughts, are brought into that continued chain of causes and effects, which, taking its beginning in the operations of the Infinite Mind, cannot but be fully understood by him—so far as they do service to the cause of truth; placing the 'great and glorious' doctrines of foreknowledge and providence—absolute foreknowledge, universal providence—upon a firm and philosophical foundation,—a thing to be wished with respect to every doctrine of any practical importance, whenever, as in this case, the great obscurity of the subject renders the interpretation of texts of Scripture dubious, which otherwise, taken as they ought to be, in the plainest and most natural meaning of the words, might be decisive. But when they go beyond this,—when they would represent this influence of moral motives as arising from a physical necessity, the very same with that which excites and governs the motions of the inanimate creation, here they confound nature's distinctions, and contradict the very principles they would seem to have established. The source of their mistake is this, that they imagine a similitude between things which admit of no comparison—between the influence of a moral motive upon the mind, and that of mechanical force upon matter. A moral motive and a mechanical force are both indeed causes,† and equally

\* I am far from assenting to the propriety of every expression or sentiment which Horsley brings forward in the passage I am quoting. It is only the general doctrine of the passage to which I would be understood as giving my assent.

† This is certainly very inaccurate language. If *motives* be *causes*, in any proper sense of the term, the fundamental principles of morals and religion are utterly incomprehensible.



certain causes, each of its proper effect ; but they are causes in very different senses of the word, and derive their energy from the most opposite principles. Force is only another name for an *efficient* cause ; it is that which impresses motion upon body, the passive recipient of a foreign impulse. A moral motive is what is more significantly called the *final* cause, and can have no influence but with a being that proposes to itself an end, chooses means, and thus *puts itself* in action. It is true that while *this* is my *end*, and while I conceive these to be the means, a definite act will as certainly follow that definite choice and judgment of my mind, provided I be free from all external restraint and impediment, as a determinate motion will be excited in a body by a force applied in a given direction. There is in both cases an equal certainty of the effect ; but the principle of the certainty in the one case and in the other is entirely different, which difference necessarily arises from the different nature of final and efficient causes. Every cause, except it be the will of the Deity, acting to the first production of substances,—every cause, I say, except this acting in this singular instance, produces its effects by acting *upon* something ; and whatever be the cause that acts, the principle of certainty lies in a capacity, in the thing on which it acts, of being affected by that action. Now, the capacity which force, or an efficient cause, requires in the object of its action, is absolute inertness. But intelligence and liberty constitute the capacity of being influenced by a final cause—by a moral motive ; and to this very liberty does this sort of cause owe its whole efficacy—the whole certainty of its operation, which certainty never can disprove the existence of that liberty upon which it is itself founded, and of which it affords the highest evidence.

“ These distinctions between the efficient and the final cause, being once understood, we may, from the Necessarian’s own principles, deduce the firmest proof of the liberty of man ; for, since God foreknows and governs future events, so far as subordinate agents are concerned in them, by the means of moral motives, that is, by final causes—since these are the engines by which he turns and wields the intellectual world, bending the perverse wills of wicked men, and of apostate spirits, to his purpose—and since these motives owe their energy, their whole success, to the liberty of the beings that are governed by them, it is in consequence most



certain, however it may seem strange, that God could not govern the world as he does, by final causes, if man were not free, no more than he could govern the material part of it mechanically, by efficient causes, if matter were not wholly passive." \* \* \* \*

#### Note L.

Πότεν το κακόν ; Whence comes evil ? is a question that has been proposed from time immemorial ; and though the most powerful understandings have been directed to its solution, it still remains in almost all its original obscurity. The principles I have mentioned seem capable of elucidating it to some extent, and I shall here endeavour to point out the light they seem fitted to throw on it.\*

Evil is of two kinds—*natural* and *moral*—and it will be convenient to attend to the former, in the first place, and to begin with examining it in so far as it involves considerations of *justice*. In every question, indeed, that respects the Divine procedure, it is of importance to begin with such considerations ; for, unless we know what the Almighty may do consistently with *justice*, we must necessarily have very imperfect ideas of what is to be ascribed to his *goodness* ; and, indeed, very imperfect ideas on the subject of his procedure generally.

It is evident, at first sight, that the Almighty may, consistently with justice, act towards his creatures—I mean perfectly innocent creatures—in any way he sees meet, provided he do not expose them to more *suffering* upon the whole than *enjoyment*—to more *pain* than *pleasure*. Whether he may not go farther than

\* Some have thought that the *origin of evil* should be referred to the fall of our first parents, and the imputation of their sin to their posterity ; but this is not to answer the question, Πότεν το κακόν ; at all, but to mistake its meaning. The meaning of the question is this, Why has God given some creatures, *that are perfectly innocent*, such constitutions, and placed them in such circumstances, that they experience suffering ? And why has he given other creatures, *also perfectly innocent*,—or at least that once were perfectly innocent—such constitutions, and placed them in such circumstances, that they not only experience suffering, but become guilty of sin ? We must take up the question as it relates to *perfectly innocent creatures*, or we evade it altogether.

this, and inflict an additional degree of suffering, I shall not venture to determine; but to this length, beyond all question, he may justly go. To mention a few instances for illustration:

1. Were the Almighty to form an *insensitive creature*, and, of course, expose it to neither suffering nor enjoyment, no person would suppose that he was acting unjustly towards it. Such a creature, indeed, would enjoy no pleasure, but neither would it suffer pain, and every just ground of complaint would be entirely precluded.

2. Were the Almighty to form a *sensitive creature*, and expose it to an equal degree of suffering and enjoyment, neither in this case would there be any injustice. Such a creature in the exercise of its sensitive functions would experience both suffering and enjoyment; but as suffering and enjoyment are exactly opposite, and when equal balance one another, there would be as little room for complaint as if there had been neither suffering nor enjoyment at all.

3. Were the Almighty to form a *sensitive and active creature*, and expose it to an equal degree of suffering and enjoyment, neither would there here be any violation of justice. Such a creature, in the exercise of its sensitive and active functions, would experience, like the former, both suffering and enjoyment, and in its intercourse with other creatures, it might receive and communicate both suffering and enjoyment; but while suffering did not predominate, there would be no just ground of complaint.

4. Were the Almighty to form a *sensitive, active, and moral creature*, and expose it to an equal degree of suffering and enjoyment, there would, in this case, be in every respect as little violation of justice as in any of the former cases. The creature, in the exercise of its sensitive, active, and moral functions, would experience both suffering and enjoyment; and, in its intercourse with other creatures, it might receive and communicate both suffering and enjoyment; but still, while the suffering did not predominate, there would be no just ground of complaint.\*

\* Perhaps it may be objected to this doctrine, that it implies that God may first inflict a degree of suffering and then make compensation by future enjoyments; in other words, that he may first do something, which, taken by itself, is a serious *injury*, and then make up for the *injury* by future kindness—conduct which it would be almost blasphemy to impute to the Almighty. But

It thus appears, that without violating justice, the Almighty may expose his creatures—even perfectly innocent creatures—to an indefinite amount of *natural evil*,\*—may subject them to labour, may doom them to disease, may consign them to death, may give them wants and tendencies that lead to labour, disease, and death; for there is obviously as little injustice in giving them wants and tendencies that lead to these evils, as in directly inflicting the evils themselves. In short, he may act towards them, as already remarked, in any way he sees meet, provided he does not expose them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment.

The chief difficulty, however, still remains; for, as every one knows, the question respecting the origin of evil does not so much relate to the *justice* of the Almighty as to his *power* and *goodness*, and is simply this—If the Almighty be *able* to prevent evil but not *willing*, where is his *goodness*? If he be *willing* but not *able*, where is his *power*? If he be both *able* and *willing*, why does evil exist? Before proceeding to examine the difficulty involved in these questions, let the two following observations be attended to.

1. If the Almighty may, without violating justice, act towards his creatures in any way he sees meet, provided he do not expose them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, it follows, that in so far as their enjoyments surpass their sufferings, the entire *overplus* is to be ascribed to his *goodness*, and of course that the amount of what they owe to his *goodness*—the amount of *clear gain*—consists in this *overplus*. In other words, the amount of good which creatures obtain is not the *absolute* enjoy-

such an objection is a mere sophism, and entirely overlooks the relation between God and his creatures. Were a master, for example, to expose a servant to a degree of toilsome labour—that is, to a degree of suffering—and then give him adequate wages—that is, adequate enjoyment—would any person allege that he had first done him a serious injury, and then made up for the injury by acts of kindness? As little injury would there be in analogous conduct on the part of God: or rather, as God has an incomparably higher right in his creatures than any earthly master has in a servant, the absence of injury on the part of God would be incomparably more manifest.

\* Suffering is not the only species of natural evil, but it is certainly the chief; and if we can answer the question, *Подлего ли казни*; with regard to it, there can be little difficulty with regard to the others.



ment which they possess, but the *superiority* of enjoyment over suffering.

2. If the amount of good which creatures obtain be the superiority of enjoyment over suffering, it follows, that equal and similar variations in the degree of both must leave the real amount of *good* exactly as before. An increase of enjoyment, for example, with an increase of suffering equal to it, would neither increase nor diminish the good, nor would a diminution of enjoyment with a diminution of suffering equal to it either increase or diminish the good, nor would the removal of suffering altogether with the removal of a degree of enjoyment equal to it either increase or diminish the good. In short, while the variations are similar and equal, the amount of good must necessarily remain unaltered. No arithmetical proposition can be more indubitable than this. Keeping these observations in our eye, let us now attend to the principles on which an explanation of the above difficulty may be attempted, or at least into which it may be resolved.

Every person allows that the object of God in his works, is the *manifestation of his attributes*, and the *communication of good to his creatures*. Some, indeed, contend, that the manifestation of his attributes is the *primary* object, and the communication of good only the *secondary*; others, that the communication of good is the primary object, and the manifestation of his attributes the secondary; and others, that these objects are so closely connected that they are not to be regarded as different objects at all, but merely one and the same under different aspects; but, if we except the advocates of atheism, who deny the Divine Being altogether, every one admits that the Almighty in his works has both objects in view.

In manifesting his attributes and communicating good, it seems obviously to be desirable that the Almighty should not only perform works of *high excellence*, but also of *indefinite variety*. The performance of the former without the latter, would indeed show him to be inconceivably exalted above all other beings; but the performance of both is requisite to show that he is not only exalted above all other beings, but that in the exercise of his attributes he is altogether *unrestricted*. It may require, for example, as much wisdom to make a man, as to make a man, and a beast, and a bird, and a fish, and a stock, and a stone; but I appeal to every

one, if the wisdom of God be not manifested with far more effect—as being far more *unrestricted* in its exercise—by making all these objects than by making a man only. No human being, indeed, can doubt for a moment, that the inconceivable variety of objects and forms of objects, the inconceivable variety of operations and forms of operations, which the works of nature display, are, in the highest degree, conducive to the manifestation of the *unrestricted* wisdom of their Divine Author: and the very same remark is applicable to all his other attributes without a single exception. *Variety* of operation is as useful for manifesting the attributes of God as *excellence* of operation. The same, too, is true in regard to the communication of good.

Another thing to be attended to, in the manifestation of the Divine attributes and the communication of good, is the relation of things to *Sovereign Will*. Whether the sovereignty of God is to be denominated an attribute, or rather a principle by which his attributes are controlled in their exercise, is a matter of mere nomenclature: but no person can doubt that the Divine attributes are, in point of fact, greatly controlled in their exercise by the influence of sovereignty, and that a very numerous and important class of phenomena is to be referred to this influence. Why, for example, did God create man at the time he created him, and not fifty years sooner? as the amount of good had thus been increased. Or why did he create the world at large at the time he created it, and not fifty years sooner? as the amount of good had thus been increased. Or why did he bestow on his creatures their present means of enjoyment, and not higher ones? as the amount of good had thus been increased. Or why did he not make stones animals, and animals men, and men angels, and angels a still higher order of beings? as the amount of good had thus been increased.

Such questions, it is evident, are not to be answered by referring to any supposed deficiency of *power* or *goodness* on the part of God, and for this very obvious reason: Admitting these attributes to be altogether infinite, and that in their exercise he had bestowed *any assignable amount of good whatsoever*, it might still have been asked, Why not a greater? Admitting, for example, that God, in the exercise of infinite power and goodness, had actually created the world fifty years sooner than he did, it might



still have been asked, and with as much force as at present, Why not fifty years sooner? Or, admitting that, in the exercise of infinite power and goodness, he had afforded all his creatures higher means of enjoyment, it might still have been asked, and with as much force as at present, Why not higher means? Or, admitting that, in the exercise of infinite power and goodness, he had made stones animals, and animals men, and men angels, and angels an higher order of creatures, it might still have been asked, and with as much force as at present, Why not higher? From the very nature of the case, there is no end to such questions. They may be asked to infinity; and in looking for an answer, we must not look merely to infinite power and goodness, but to infinite power and goodness as controlled by infinite sovereignty. In other words, if God meant to bestow on his creatures any amount of good whatever, he behoved to bestow it at some time or other, and in some degree or other; and the determination of the particular time, and the particular degree, behoved to be as his sovereign will saw meet to direct.

A third thing to be attended to, in the manifestation of the Divine attributes, and the communication of good, is the *nature of the impression* to be made on the minds of creatures. So far as we have the means of knowing, there is not such a creature in the whole universe as a mere abstract intelligence—a mere intellectual being. Every intelligent creature with which we are acquainted, is susceptible of various emotions or *affections*—such as affections of esteem, of love, of hope, of fear, of reverence, &c.,—and in manifesting himself to such creatures, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the Almighty should address himself only to their *understandings*, and not also to their *hearts*. On the contrary, both reason and revelation would lead us to conclude that he should address himself to *both*; and particularly that he should present to them such scenes as are calculated to impress them with those feelings of veneration for the sublime glories of his character, with which, as the Great Sovereign Ruler of Nature, they ought ever to regard him.

*The manifestation of the divine attributes and the communication of good, in works indefinitely and impressively varied, according to the Sovereignty of the Divine will, is the true ground, I imagine,*



on which we are to rest our answer to the question, Ποθεν το κακον ; Whence comes evil ?

Suppose, for example, that when the Almighty created the world, he meant to bestow on innocent creatures a certain amount of good, and there was evidently one of two courses which he might have adopted. He might have bestowed a degree of enjoyment equal to the good without any *suffering at all*, or he might have bestowed an *additional* amount of enjoyment with a degree of suffering equal to the *addition*. In the latter case, the real amount of good would have been precisely as in the former ; but the difference, in other respects, might be immense, for the sufferings might be varied in kind, might be varied in degree, might be varied in their manner of infliction, in fact, might be varied indefinitely ; and not only so, but might vary indefinitely every thing else with which they come into connexion. So that, without diminishing the amount of good in the smallest degree, a principle of variety would have been introduced that is altogether unlimited.\*

This principle, too, is in every respect well calculated to produce and sustain those feelings of veneration for the Divine Being, with which, as already remarked, every intelligent creature ought to regard him. The communication of *unmixed enjoyment* is no doubt fitted to convey to the understanding the belief of the benevolence of God, and also to convey to the heart certain feelings of love and of gratitude, on account of his benevolence ; but it is in witnessing scenes where, though enjoyment predominates, yet suffering exists in large proportions, where misery and happiness, where evil and good, are both to be met with, that the soul is most powerfully impressed with the awful glories of the Omnipotent Jehovah, and made to fall prostrate before his throne. No kind or degree of unmingled enjoyment, according to the present constitution of intelligent creatures, can ever be accompanied with such impressive results.

If such be the consequences of suffering ; if without being of any *real disservice* to creatures, it be the source of effects of a character the most interesting ; if it give an indefinitely varied

\* Suffering, too, it must be observed, though an evil in itself, is often the source of much enjoyment.

and sublime colouring to the whole of nature's operations, and make us look up with emotions of indefinitely varied and sublime reverence to nature's God, no marvel that he, "who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," should be the author of its being.

It is the greatest error imaginable to suppose, that because God is good, he should communicate nothing to his creatures but *unmixed pleasure*. This is to entertain the most low and unintellectual ideas of his goodness—incomparably lower than of the goodness of an enlightened fellow mortal. What we should expect of Divine goodness is, that while it bestows pleasure in indefinitely greater measure than pain, it should nevertheless avail itself of the advantages of both, and multiply, and diversify, and intermingle them in every variety of form—the very phenomena which we actually witness.

Perhaps, indeed, it may be asked, could not the Almighty, who is every way infinite, have resorted to some other principle than suffering for accomplishing his purposes?—a principle which, from its very nature, is evil. But the answer is obvious. In so far as suffering and enjoyment are equal, they are neither good nor evil. They exactly balance each other; and in reference to good and evil, are on the same footing as any thing perfectly indifferent.

It may also be asked, Would not the amount of good have been greater if the enjoyments had been continued as they are, but all suffering withdrawn? The answer to this question is likewise obvious. The amount of good would undoubtedly have been greater; but the question is the same, in effect, with asking, Why has not God bestowed on his creatures a greater degree of good than he has bestowed? A question which, as formerly remarked, may be asked to infinity; for let the degree of good be what it may, it might still be asked, Why not greater?

Besides, even although God had designed to bestow a greater degree of good, there was no necessity for withdrawing a single atom of suffering. He had merely to increase the enjoyments, and leave suffering as it is. By this expedient, he had as effectually accomplished his purpose, as by abolishing suffering altogether; and, at the same time, maintained that interesting principle of variety in all its force.



In short, we may turn or twist the matter as we please; but to this conclusion we must inevitably come in the end—that if God meant to bestow on his creatures any particular amount of good, whether great or small, he might accomplish his purpose in one of two ways, either by bestowing a certain degree of enjoyment *alone*, or by bestowing an *increased* degree of enjoyment, and a degree of suffering equal to the *increase*; while, by this latter expedient, he would introduce a principle of impressive variety that is altogether indefinite.

I may here remark, that in examining the question respecting the origin of evil, we should ever be attentive to argue from *reason*, and not from mere *feeling*. Had a higher degree of suffering been allotted to creatures than at present, and an equally higher degree of enjoyment, the amount of good had been exactly as it is; but in all probability, in consequence of our feelings, we had regarded the scene with much more astonishment, and been ready to ask, with much more amazement, *Πότεν το κακόν*; Whence comes evil?

On the other hand, had suffering been altogether withdrawn, and an equal degree of enjoyment also withdrawn, the amount of good had likewise been exactly as it is; but in all probability, we had regarded the scene with much less astonishment, and asked, with much less amazement, Whence so low a degree of good? In reality, we witness innumerable scenes in the mineral and vegetable worlds, where there is neither suffering nor enjoyment of any kind, and it scarcely ever occurs to us to ask, Whence so low a degree of good? We should reckon him a very singular person who should gravely request to be informed, why the stones of the ground, or the trees of the forest, enjoy so low a degree of good; or who should gravely urge their insensitive condition as an argument against the goodness or power of their author. The sufferings of creatures, even although their sufferings were fully equal to their enjoyments, afford *to the eye of reason* an argument equally futile against the goodness or power of their Author.

Let us now attend to the case of *Moral Evil*. Moral evil is considerably different from *natural*; but the question respecting its origin may be resolved, I imagine, into the same general principle, viz.: *The manifestation of the Divine attributes, and the communication of good, in operations indefinitely and impressively*



*varied, according to the sovereignty of the Divine will.* Let us begin, as in the former case, with examining the question, in so far as it involves considerations of *justice*.

If the Almighty may, consistently with justice, act towards his creatures in any way he sees meet, provided he do not expose them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, it necessarily follows, that if he do not expose moral creatures—I mean innocent moral creatures—to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, he may require them to perform any duty, however *difficult*, or any number of duties, however *difficult*, provided the *difficulty* do not surpass their *ability*.

Were the Almighty, for example, to create an innocent moral creature with ability to labour, he might, in perfect consistency with justice, if he did not expose it to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, require it to labour. Were he to create an innocent moral creature with ability to control certain internal dispositions, affections, and passions, he might, in perfect consistency with justice, if he did not expose it to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, require it to control these dispositions, affections, and passions.\* Or were he to create an innocent moral creature with ability to resist the influence of certain outward temptations, he might, in equal consistency with justice, if he did not expose it to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, require it to resist the influence of these temptations. In short, if the Almighty do not expose an innocent moral creature to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, he may, consistently with justice, as already remarked, require it to perform any duty, however difficult, or any number of duties, however difficult, provided the difficulty do not exceed its ability.

This doctrine is so evidently true, that no person of the smallest pretensions to candour can venture to deny it; and it completely acquits the Almighty from all injustice in reference to every duty which he requires innocent moral creatures to discharge; for no person imagines that he requires them to discharge any duty so difficult as to exceed their ability, or that he exposes them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment.

\* Their various dispositions, affections, and passions, form the chief source of the difficulties which mankind experience in the performance of duty.

The chief source of perplexity, however—as in the case of *natural evil*—does not relate to *justice*, but to *power* and *goodness*, and is involved in the questions already mentioned—If God be *able* to prevent evil, but not *willing*, where is his *goodness*? If he be *willing*, but not *able*, where is his *power*? If he be both *able* and *willing*, why does evil exist? To prepare the way for answering these questions, in reference to moral evil, let the two following observations be attended to:—

1. If the Almighty may, consistently with justice, require innocent moral creatures to perform any duty, however difficult, which does not exceed their ability, provided he do not expose them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, it follows, that, in so far as their ability exceeds the difficulty, the whole *overplus* is to be ascribed to his *goodness*; and, of course, that the amount of this species of good is the amount of this *overplus*. In other words, the amount of this species of good is not the *absolute* ability which moral creatures possess, but the *superiority* of their abilities over their difficulties.

2. If the amount of this species of good be the superiority of ability over difficulty, it follows, that equal and similar variations in the degree of both must leave the amount of the good exactly as it was. An increase of ability, for example, with an increase of difficulty equal to it, would neither increase nor diminish the good; nor would a diminution of difficulty, with a diminution of ability equal to it, either increase or diminish the good; nor would the removal of difficulty altogether, with the removal of a degree of ability equal to it, either increase or diminish the good. In short, as was remarked in the case of suffering and enjoyment, while the variations are equal and similar, the amount of good must necessarily remain unaltered. No arithmetical proposition can be more indubitable than this.

If these observations be duly attended to, we shall find, I am persuaded, that the existence of moral evil is completely resolvable into the principle already mentioned—the manifestation of the divine attributes and the communication of good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied, according to the sovereignty of the Divine will.

Suppose, for example, that when the Almighty created the world, he meant to bestow on innocent moral creatures a certain



amount of that species of good, which consists of *power* or *ability*; and there was evidently one of two courses which he might have adopted. He might have bestowed the exact amount of ability *without any difficulty at all*; or he might have bestowed an *additional* amount of ability with a degree of difficulty equal to the *addition*. In the latter case, the real amount of good had been precisely as in the former; but the difference in other respects might be immense; for the difficulties might be varied in kind, in degree, in their manner of operation; in fact, might be varied indefinitely; and not only so, but might vary indefinitely every thing else with which they come into connexion. So that, exactly as in the former case, without diminishing the amount of good in the smallest degree, a principle of variety had been introduced that is altogether unlimited.\*

This principle, too, like that of suffering, is calculated to produce a deep impression on the mind in regard to the divine character; and that, too, whether creatures make a right use of their abilities or a wrong. If they use their abilities aright, the difficulties they encounter must have a direct tendency to make them look up with feelings of devout and humble reverence to him, on whom all their abilities, and all their difficulties, continually depend, to entreat his beneficent assistance to support them, and, relying on his aid, to bring into the most resolute and vigorous exercise every talent they possess. The performance of duty, when perfectly easy, can have no such tendency. The conduct of the agent is too placid to occasion much feeling of any kind. It is when obstacles are to be surmounted—it is when virtue has to contend with vice—it is when holiness has to strive for the mastery with sin, that the movements of the heart are most powerfully excited, and the soul made to acknowledge, with adoring wonder, the dependence of every thing on Him who is omnipotent.

Suppose, however, that creatures make a wrong use of their abilities; and in this case, I admit that the impression on the minds of these creatures themselves may involve no reverential feelings whatever, in regard to the Divine character. On the contrary, the effect of their misconduct may be entirely to annihilate

\* Difficulty, too, it must be observed, is often the source of ability. By struggling with difficulties, we almost always increase our ability to surmount them.



such feelings, and produce those of contempt and aversion. But what must be the impression on the minds of *observers*? Beyond all controversy, there is something in God's permitting that to be done which is contrary to his very nature, in his giving creatures such constitutions, and placing them in such circumstances, that *that* indubitably ensues which he regards with abhorrence, in his warning, and exhorting, and beseeching them to avoid that which he himself could prevent by a single act of his will; and in his doing all this, in perfect consistency with the infinite power, and infinite goodness, and infinite rectitude of his own character, that is calculated to overwhelm the soul with amazement, and make it approach the throne of Jehovah, if with confidence and love, at the same time with fear and trembling. Even delinquents themselves, if they be not thoroughly brutalized, must feel the effects which such a view of things is fitted to produce.

If these be the impressions which the permission of moral evil be fitted to occasion,—if even when creatures are placed in such circumstances as will indubitably be attended with its commission, the rectitude of the Divine Being can in no degree be impeached; if, on the contrary, a sublime and awful glory be thrown around his whole nature, and his creatures taught to adore and obey him, we need hardly be surprised that the permission should exist.

I may here remark, in regard to moral evil, that God only *permits* it, and is not its author. When we hear of his giving creatures such constitutions, and placing them in such circumstances, as will be indubitably followed by the commission of sin, we are in no small danger of supposing that he himself is somehow or other implicated in the sin. But, according to the doctrine I have stated, and unquestionably, according to the reality of things, no supposition can be more thoroughly erroneous. In every case of sin, without a single exception, God only *permits* it, but never *causes* it. His creatures have sufficient ability to avoid its seductions;\* and if they do not avoid them, it is not *he* but *they* who are to blame. Its indubitably taking place, is not because *he makes* it indubitably take place, but because *they themselves make* it indubitably take place. In other words, it is because they themselves indubitably commit it.

\* Let it be observed, that I mean *natural ability* in contradistinction to what is called *moral ability*.

It may be asked, indeed, could not the Almighty, who is every way infinite, have resorted to some other expedient for accomplishing his purposes, than the placing difficulties in the way of duty, and thus occasioning so much evil? But the answer is almost self-evident. In as far as ability has the *superiority* over difficulty, it is all one as to the power of performing duty, as if there were *no difficulty at all*, but merely a degree of ability equal to this *superiority*. If the degree of ability, for example, be *ten*, and the degree of difficulty *eight*, it is the very same thing as to the power of performing duty, as if there were no difficulty whatever, but merely a degree of ability equal to *two*. So that, by conjoining difficulty with ability, while many advantages are gained, there is no advantage whatever lost.

Perhaps it may be farther asked, Would not the power to perform duty have been greater, if ability had been continued as it is, but all difficulty withdrawn? The answer is likewise almost self-evident. The degree of power had certainly been greater, but the question is the same, in effect, with asking, Why has not God bestowed on his moral creatures a greater degree of power than he has bestowed? a question which may be asked to infinity, for let the degree of power be what it may, it might still be asked, Why not a greater?

Besides, even although the Almighty had meant to bestow a greater degree of power, there was no necessity for withdrawing a single atom of difficulty. He had merely to increase ability, and leave difficulty as it is. By this expedient, he had as effectually accomplished his purpose, as by abolishing difficulty altogether.\*

\* Though *harmony* is usually said to be the great principle that presides over the universe, yet it should never be forgotten, that to whatever quarter we look we see things completely *opposed* to one another. The projectile motion of the planets, for example, is opposed by the law of gravitation; the tendency of smoke to fall to the ground, is opposed by the pressure of the atmosphere; the tendency of the ocean to remain at rest, is opposed by the influence of the winds, of the moon, and of many other causes. Predilections are often opposed by antipathies, evidence for a doctrine by evidence against it, and motives to perform an action by motives to avoid the action altogether. *Harmony* is undoubtedly the great principle that presides over the universe, but it is *harmony* controlling the elements of *discord*—the elements of *opposition*; and the superiority of good over evil—of enjoyment over suffering—of ability over diffi-



The truth is, though moral evil is exceedingly different from natural, yet the questions concerning their origin are almost exact counterparts of each other, and, *mutatis mutandis*, may be explained in nearly the same way. Both questions come really to this, not Why is there any evil? but Why is there not *more good*? And the questions formerly mentioned—If God be *able* to prevent evil but not *willing*, where is his goodness? If he be *willing* but not *able*, where is his power? If he be both *able* and *willing*, why does evil exist? are the same in effect with these—If God be able to bestow a *greater amount of good*, but not *willing*, where is his *goodness*? If he be willing, but not able, where is his *power*? If he be both able and willing, why does not a *greater amount of good exist*?—Questions which may be asked to infinity; for let the amount of good be what it may, it might still be asked, Why not greater? The infinite power and goodness of God have never been thought to render it necessary that he should bestow on every creature,—or indeed on any creature,—an infinite amount of good. The degree of good, therefore, must have its limits somewhere or other, and the fixing these limits can be imputed to nothing but his design to manifest his own attributes and communicate good to his creatures, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied according to his sovereign will.

All the facts in the procedure of God with which we are acquainted, either by the light of nature, or the light of revelation, are agreeable to this doctrine; and, indeed, are mere exemplifications of it. When God created matter, he created it inanimate, though he could easily have given it the principle of life. He is not, however, exposing it to more suffering, upon the whole, than enjoyment; for he is not exposing it to suffering or enjoyment at all, and his object with regard to it seems plainly to be, as already stated, to manifest his attributes, and communicate good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied according to his sovereign will. When God created the lower animals, he created them irrational, though he could easily have given them the principle of reason. There is no ground, however, to believe, that he

culty—is merely an example of this species of harmony. The existence of evil, therefore, opposed as it is by the existence of good, is quite in accordance with the analogy of all the leading phenomena of nature.



exposes them to more suffering, upon the whole, than enjoyment; and his object with regard to them likewise, seems plainly to be, to manifest his attributes, and communicate good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied according to his sovereign will.

So in the case of moral evil. When God created our first parents, he bestowed on them certain privileges, and exposed them to certain temptations; but no person has ever ventured to allege, that he exposed them to greater suffering than enjoyment, or to greater temptations than they were able to resist. His conduct towards them, therefore, was not only justifiable, but perfectly accordant with the great object of all his works,—the manifestation of his attributes, and the communication of good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied according to his sovereign will. There cannot, indeed, be a doubt, that he might have given them higher privileges, and exposed them to lower temptations. He might have given them more knowledge, more prudence, more firmness, or he might have placed them in a different situation, and freed them from the seductions of their great deceiver. He might, in short, in perfect consistency with their free agency, and all the principles that characterised them as human beings, have rendered their stability in innocence *indubitably certain*.\* But

\* The *indubitable stability* of mankind in innocence, has been supposed by some to be incompatible with their *freedom of agency*; but no supposition can be more thoroughly without foundation. Has not God given to the children of English parents such constitutions, and placed them in such circumstances, as are indubitably attended with their *speaking English*, and done so—though speaking is a voluntary action—without destroying or even impairing their freedom of agency? Has not God given to mankind at large such constitutions, and placed them in such circumstances, as are often indubitably attended with their *eating and drinking*, and done so—though eating and drinking are voluntary actions—without destroying, or even impairing, their freedom of agency? And why could he not, with just as much ease, have given to the first of our race such a constitution, and placed them in such circumstances, as would have been attended with perfect rectitude of demeanour, and done so, without destroying or impairing their freedom of agency? In no case whatever do *motives* impair the freedom of the will; and yet let motives be presented to it in a certain way, and it will as indubitably act according to them,—whether for good or for evil,—as any physical object will act according to physical impulse.

This doctrine, I may add, is perfectly agreeable to that of inspiration. Good men in a future world are represented in Scripture as perfect in holiness, and

to ask why he did not, is merely to repeat the question already so often mentioned—Why did he not bestow on them more good? a question which may be asked to infinity. The true principle into which his procedure is to be resolved, is the sovereignty of his own will manifesting his attributes, and communicating good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied.

It may be said, indeed, that to reduce the question, Why is there evil? into the more general question, Why is there not more good? is not to remove the difficulties of the subject, but merely to exchange one set of difficulties for another. This is so far true; but let it be remembered, that all the explanations that philosophy can give are merely such reductions as I have attempted—the reducing less general principles into those that are more general. When Newton accounted for the motions of the heavenly bodies by the principle of gravitation, he left gravitation itself unaccounted for; and though he had accounted for it, he behaved to have left some other principle unaccounted for.

I may also observe, that although I have referred the question, Why is there not more good? to the Divine Sovereignty, yet I have not laid more stress on this attribute than the subject seems fairly to authorize. The good which creatures enjoy must have its limit somewhere or other,—for no person believes it to be infinite—and what other principle than sovereignty can we ultimately refer to for determining those limits?

The attribute of sovereignty, too, it should never be forgotten, is as important as any in the Divine Nature, and everywhere is as strikingly manifested. Why, for example, hath God given light to the sun? Why hath he given grass to the fields? Why hath he given heat to the fire? Why hath he given coldness to ice? Why, in short, hath he done any of those things which we see he hath done, when he could easily have done things otherwise? Does any person expect a different answer, or is any other answer requisite than that already mentioned—the manifestation of the Di-

*confirmed* in holiness; but surely their free agency is not annihilated? Were they ceasing to be free agents, they would not be men at all. The angels in heaven are represented in Scripture as perfect in holiness, and *confirmed* in holiness; but surely they too are free agents? Were they not free agents, they could neither be holy nor unholy, for they would not be moral beings of any kind.



vine attributes, and the communication of good, in operations indefinitely and impressively varied according to the *sovereignty of the Divine will*? We may guess, perhaps, at some subordinate reasons, but the *sovereignty* of the Divine character, varying indefinitely the manifestation of the Divine attributes, and the communication of good, is our only resource at the last.

In the intelligent world, we witness innumerable phenomena, of which we must give precisely the same account. Why hath God placed the inhabitants of Christian countries in more eligible circumstances than those of heathen countries, when he could easily have made all alike? Why hath he placed some Christian countries in more eligible circumstances than others? Why hath he given some men more enlarged understandings than others? Why hath he given some men stronger passions than others? Why hath he given some men more faithful and affectionate parents than others? Why hath he placed some men under a better political government than others? Why hath he given men the faculties of human beings, and not the faculties of angels? Why, in short, hath he established those innumerable distinctions among his intelligent creatures which we everywhere see he hath established? The same answer as above must ultimately be given—the *sovereignty* of the Divine character.

The whole economy of Providence shows, that neither in the natural nor moral world does the Almighty set any limits, except those prescribed by justice and wisdom, to the exercise of his sovereignty—that in some cases he bestows an indefinitely small amount of good, in others a larger amount, in others an amount still larger. In fact, that though *justice* is never violated, yet he will not be restrained in the exercise of his sovereignty, though events should take place which he himself hates with a perfect hatred, and which he cannot look upon but with entire detestation.

To a reflecting mind, nothing can appear more becoming, than that the Almighty should act thus. Sovereignty is one of the most godlike attributes of the Divine nature. It is that on which the awful supremacy of Jehovah seems chiefly to depend; and while he is ever attentive to do justice to others, is it not reasonable that he do justice to himself; and if he manifest his sovereignty at all, manifest it in all its glory? Is it like a being invested with the attributes of *Divinity*, to set any other limits to



the manifestation of his sovereign prerogatives, than the undeviating rectitude of his own character? Would our ideas of "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," be raised by finding him hampered in the manifestation of his perfections, by a fear of doing *less good*, than some of his creatures, to whom he is doing *no injustice*, may wish? Is it not a far more godlike procedure—a procedure far more conformable to the inconceivable sublimity of his nature—to do *injury* to none, but, at the same time, to act *according to the counsels of his own will*? \*

It ought never to be forgotten, that the Almighty has to promote his own glory as well as the good of his creatures. Many, in examining the question of evil, seem to make no account of the Divine glory at all; but proceed in their theories as if the good of creation were the *exclusive* object of the Most High. This, beyond all controversy, is a mistaken view of the subject. It is impossible to look either to the works of creation or of Providence, without being satisfied, that the manifestation of his glory, as well as the good of his creatures, is what God has in view; or, as I have already mentioned—that the object of God in his works is the manifestation of his attributes, and likewise the good of his creatures. This doctrine, when stated generally, will be assented to by every one, and it seems fairly to warrant the conclusions I have drawn from it. †

\* Even in manifesting his sovereignty, the Almighty may bestow much good. Would a legislature be thought deficient in goodness which should resort to measures, the object of which was, to impress all with a sense of its sovereign jurisdiction? Are not such measures often resorted to even by the best and wisest legislatures, and with the best and wisest designs? And may not the Great Legislator of the universe, for wise and gracious designs, resort to similar measures? Is it not, in reality, of the last importance that such an impression be not only produced but constantly preserved? that unto the Author and Governor of all, "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess that he is Lord." Or, would it be proper to renounce this line of policy, because some of his creatures to whom he has done much *good*, and has done *no injury*, will perversely take occasion from it to do what is evil?

† Would there be any impropriety in supposing that the Almighty regards himself, in his moral government, as merely *one of the beings* in the universe, and that he treats himself precisely as he treats others—making due allowance for difference of rank and character? If this supposition be admitted, it will follow, that the whole universe of moral being is under the same grand system

Archbishop King, in his Treatise on the Origin of Evil, has formed a theory founded on the supposition, that the highest class or grade of creatures may be so full, that it cannot conveniently admit of additions; that there may be an indefinite number of descending grades, each of which is full in its order, and that from the very nature of the case, therefore, some of the lower grades must be liable to evil. But this is a mere system of fanciful conjectures, unsupported by a shadow of evidence, and explains nothing after all.

Another theory which some seem vaguely to adopt, is founded on the supposition, that the economy of *nature* is intimately connected with the economy of *grace*; and that as the faults of the former are compensated by the excellencies of the latter, there is no room, upon the whole, to complain. This theory proceeds on the assumption, that the economy of nature is *unduly rigorous*, and needs to be mitigated by a dispensation of a more merciful character. But such an assumption is altogether inadmissible. The sacred writings everywhere represent the economy of grace—and it is only from them we know any thing of it at all—not as a *compensation for undue rigour* in a different one, but as a system of *sovereign and unmerited kindness*. A compensation, indeed, for *undue rigour* would be no *grace* at all, but merely a remuneration to the claims of *justice*.

Perhaps I should also advert to another theory which some seem willing to adopt, at least in reference to moral evil—that *free agency* being founded on *contingence*, must imply liability to sin in its very nature; and that sin, therefore, must either be permitted, or *free agency* destroyed. Stewart decidedly adopts this theory, but it leads directly to the rejection of revelation, and, in fact, to complete atheism. All who believe the sacred writings, believe that there are angels in heaven who are *free agents*, but not liable to sin; and that good men in heaven will be *free agents*, but not liable to sin; and all who believe in the being of a God, believe that he is a free agent, but not liable to sin.

The truth is, that the prevailing sentiments of philosophers, not

of equal laws, and the Divine glory the *chief end* of all. Due allowance is not made for difference of rank and character unless the Divine glory be the chief end of every thing.



only on the subject of evil, but on many other subjects, involve the most defective ideas of the Divine character. *The god of philosophers* is hardly any thing but a being of indefinite *power*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness*. Such a being, however, nowhere exists. He is a *mere fiction of the understanding*. He is neither the God of creation, of providence, nor of redemption, but a bare *philosophical abstraction*. The God whom good men are accustomed to adore, is as superior to the god of philosophers, as *theirs* to the gods of the lowest of the heathen.

Having now endeavoured to dispose of the general question, *Πότεν το κακόν*; it may not be improper to advert to one or two subordinate particulars connected with it.

1. It is an evident dictate of reason, that guilt deserves punishment, and if the punishment which the Almighty inflicts on the guilty be equal to what they deserve, there is obviously neither *injury* nor *goodness*, but mere *justice*. If the means of obtaining remission of punishment be afforded to the guilty, these means are entirely of *goodness*. If, besides the means of remission, there likewise be afforded the means of obtaining happiness, these means are also of *goodness*. If, in any case, the means of obtaining remission and happiness be withheld, or, if in some cases they be withheld, and in others afforded; or, if in some, they be afforded in a greater degree, and in others in a less, to ask, why all the guilty are not favoured, and favoured equally, is merely to repeat the question so often already mentioned, Why has not God bestowed *more good*? a question which can only be answered by referring to his *sovereign will*.

2. In consequence of the transgressions of the guilty, it may happen that perfectly innocent creatures *connected with them*, will be exposed to sufferings they would have otherwise escaped; and to what extent, it may be asked, may they be thus exposed to suffering? The answer is obvious. Perfectly innocent creatures may be exposed to any degree of suffering that does not exceed their enjoyments, *although unconnected with the guilty altogether*; and consequently there can be no injustice in exposing them to the same degree of suffering *in consequence of that connexion*.

On this principle, we can easily account for the justice of the Divine procedure, in exposing the lower animals to much suffering in consequence of their connexion with man. The Almighty,



without injustice, might have exposed them to the same degree of suffering though they had not been connected with man at all. Their suffering, however, as they do at present, accomplishes an object of the very highest importance. Had they suffered *unconnected* with man, their sufferings would have shown nothing of the evil of sin whatever; whereas, by suffering *in consequence of the sins of man*, while justice is not violated, the tendency of sin is most fearfully displayed, as we behold its malignant influence even on those that are altogether guiltless.

3. In consequence of the transgressions of the guilty, it may happen that perfectly innocent moral creatures *connected with them*, may be exposed to difficulties in the performance of duty they would otherwise have escaped; and to what extent, it may be asked, may they be thus exposed to difficulties? The answer to this question is just as obvious as that to the preceding. Perfectly innocent moral creatures may be exposed to any degree of difficulty whatever that does not exceed their ability, *although unconnected with the guilty altogether*; and, of course, there can be no injustice in exposing them to the same degree of difficulty *in consequence of that connexion*.

On this principle, we can easily account for the justice of the Divine procedure in allotting to children, *even although they were supposed to be perfectly innocent*, such parents as will expose them by their sinful conduct and example to very powerful inducements to commit iniquity—even to inducements so powerful as will indubitably be complied with. No person supposes that any inducement to sin, although, in point of fact, it be indubitably complied with, ever exceeds the ability of the agent to resist it—his *natural ability*, to wit, in contradistinction to what is called *moral ability*. On the contrary, the most stern expounders of morals are unanimous in maintaining, that inability to perform duty is altogether of a moral kind; and from the very nature of the case, indeed, it cannot be otherwise.\*

\* Let it be observed, that moral inability is not inability commonly so called. Want of moral ability, for instance, to perform duty, is merely want of *willingness* to perform it. Hence some have asserted that want of moral ability to perform duty is a *sin*. Such an assertion has, no doubt, rather a paradoxical aspect; but it really comes to nothing but this, that want of *willingness* to perform duty is a *sin*, an assertion, the truth of which every one will allow.

On the same principle we can see, that in consequence of the fall of Adam, the Almighty, without injustice, might appoint all his descendants—even *although they were supposed to be perfectly innocent*—to receive such dispositions, affections, and passions, &c.; and to be placed in such circumstances, as would expose them to very powerful inducements to iniquity—even to inducements so powerful as would indubitably be complied with. As already remarked, no person supposes that any inducement to sin, though, in point of fact, it be indubitably complied with, ever exceeds the ability of the agent to resist it. His natural ability, to wit, in contradistinction to what is called moral ability.

In short, if the doctrine I have proposed be admitted,—that the Almighty may consistently with justice act towards perfectly innocent moral creatures, in any way he sees meet, provided he do not expose them to more suffering upon the whole than enjoyment, nor to greater difficulties than exceed their abilities—it will necessarily follow, that, *in consequence of the fall of Adam*, he might, without violating justice, have doomed the whole human race to labour, to disease, to death; and also have doomed them to receive such constitutions, and to be placed in such circumstances, as would expose them to very powerful inducements to sin—to inducements so powerful as would indubitably be complied with. The reason is manifest; he might, without violating justice, have done all this, and more than this, though there had never been an Adam at all.

His inflicting such evils, however, *in consequence of the fall of Adam*, is calculated to serve purposes of the very highest magnitude. What event in the whole universe, if we except the death of the Redeemer alone, is more calculated to display the Almighty's hatred of sin, than his inflicting for *one sin of one man*, calamities so tremendous? And what event in the whole universe, if we again except the death of the Redeemer, is more calculated to display the glories of his character, than his doing this in perfect consistency with the strictest rules of moral equity?\*

\* I must again remark, that I am far from pretending to be capable of explaining, on the principles of reason, all the particulars involved in the question of *Original Sin*. If my remarks be received as correct so far as they go, it is all that I aim at.



I am perfectly aware of the paradoxical, and even startling aspect of some of the sentiments I have now expressed ; but they not only flow directly from very evident principles, they completely accord with *facts* which Providence most distinctly presents, and with *doctrines* which inspiration most explicitly inculcates ; and no man, I am persuaded, can faithfully interpret either the one or the other, if he do not admit them.

The Scriptures declare that God “ visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.” This declaration, I know, has been sometimes explained to mean,—the third and fourth generation of such children as approve the iniquities of their fathers—but such an explanation annihilates the meaning altogether : And when we look to facts, we everywhere see children suffering for the iniquities of their fathers, though, instead of approving, they bitterly lament and sincerely condemn them.

The Scriptures also declare, that God shows mercy unto thousands of generations of the children of those parents who love him and keep his commandments. And when we look to facts, we everywhere see children benefited by the virtues of their parents, even though they ridicule and despise them. What is more ; when we look to facts, we see the two declarations most completely exemplified, even in the case of the very same individuals, and at the very same time. For how frequently does it happen that children suffer much harm in consequence of the iniquities of some of their ancestors, while at the very same time they are enjoying much good in consequence of the virtues of certain others ?—So entirely do Scripture and experience agree with the conclusions of a sound philosophy.

I may here remark, that philosophers often account for a variety of physical paradoxes, by merely resolving things into their elements, and then reasoning synthetically from these elements to the explanation of the actual phenomena ; and would they only resort to the same very simple expedient in the case of morals, they might no less successfully explain a variety of moral paradoxes.

I shall add in conclusion, that every principle in the divine administration seems to be carried to an extent that is altogether indefinite. If we look to the world of matter, we find creatures so

minute, that no human eye can discern them, and systems so immense that no human thought can comprehend them; we find movements so slow that no human eye can trace them, and others so rapid that no human imagination can follow them. In the world of mind, the features are similar. There are creatures possessed of such constitutions, and placed in such circumstances, that, free and intelligent though they are, it is indubitably certain that they *will not* commit sin—as the angels in heaven; and others possessed of such constitutions, and placed in such circumstances, that, free and intelligent though they are, it is indubitably certain that they *will* commit sin—as human beings upon earth. The obedience, too, which God requires of his free and intelligent creatures, is so strict as not to admit of a single deviation; and the disobedience he forbids so peremptory, as not to allow of a single transgression. The rewards which he promises to the good, are so transcendently blissful, as utterly to surpass their most exalted expectations; and the punishment which he threatens to the bad so entirely afflictive, as utterly to exceed their most gloomy apprehensions. “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and to him, and through him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.”

Note K.

There could hardly be room for doubt, though the sacred writings had said nothing on the subject, that when man was at first formed, he was formed with all his dispositions and endowments—mental and bodily, constitutional and acquired—as in a state of mature age, as without their existence in some degree of maturity, it is difficult to understand how he could have lived. What, for instance, could he have done without the faculty of seeing objects at some distance?—a faculty which, in the present state of nature, is acquired—or the faculty of walking from one place to another?—a faculty which, in the present state of nature, is also acquired. Without these faculties we can hardly imagine how he could have existed even for a week: And the same may be said of several others. Such endowments, therefore, we seem fairly warranted to conclude, were actually possessed by him;



and, in fact, that both in mind and in body he was formed in a state of mature vigour.

If the first of mankind, or rather the first pair of mankind, for there must at least have been a pair, were created in a state of maturity, they must have possessed the same structure as if they had arrived at that stage of being according to the ordinary course of nature; and, consequently, they must have exhibited the same structure, as if they had passed through a variety of *prior stages*. In fact, even though they had been created in the state of mere babes and sucklings, they must have presented the appearance of having passed through a variety of *prior stages*, for the bodies of infants present such appearances as well as those of perfect age.

Farther, if the first of mankind were formed in a state of maturity, there cannot be a doubt that the first of the lower animals—or at least the first of the principal species—were formed in a similar state. Not only does analogy favour this conclusion; the circumstances of the case seem completely to establish it. If the lower animals were created as at birth, how could they have lived? In their infant state, (if I may so style it,) they require parental support as well as human beings; and since, at creation, they had no such support, they must have been formed in a condition to dispense with it.

Like mankind, too, they must have possessed the same structure as if they had arrived at a mature stage of being according to the existing laws of nature; and, of course, they must have presented the same structure as if they had passed through a variety of *prior stages*. In reality, though created as at birth, they must have presented the appearance of having passed through a variety of *prior stages*, for animals of the most tender age present such appearances as well as those of full growth: Nor is it possible to stop here.

How could man and beast have lived without vegetables? or how could they have lived had these been scattered over the face of the earth in the state of *seed*, or even in the state in which they first spring from the ground? On either supposition, the whole animated world, without a series of miracles, would have almost immediately perished; and the fair conclusion, therefore, is, that in the part of the world where the first of mankind, and the first

of the lower animals were created, the principal tribes of vegetables were formed in a state of maturity, and the rest in different stages of growth, according to their respective natures and habits.

Here, too, the same observations occur as before. If vegetables were created in a mature stage of being, they must have possessed the same structure as if they had reached that stage according to the existing laws of nature, and, of course, must have presented the same structure as if they had passed through a variety of *prior* stages. This, indeed, must have been the case, in whatever stage of their being they were created—even though created in the state of seed, or of incipient germination, for seed is an organized body as well as a full plant, and exhibits as decisive marks of having passed through the successive steps of *prior* operations. But even here it is impossible to stop.

How could man, or beast, or vegetable, have lived, unless the earth itself had been created in what may be called a mature stage of being—in a condition, to wit, adapted to support its different inhabitants? Without elevations and depressions, the whole earth must have been covered with the waters of the ocean; without different stratifications, springs—the natural source of streams and rivers—could hardly have existed; and without a soil spread over its surface, and suitably attempered, nothing could either have taken root or vegetated. If we be warranted, therefore, to conclude that other creatures were formed in a state of maturity, we seem no less warranted to conclude, that the earth itself was formed in a similar state; in other words, that it was formed, substantially, as we at present find it—although, no doubt, local and temporary changes may have taken place.

Here, likewise, the preceding observations occur: If the world was created in a mature stage of being, it must have possessed the same structure, as if it had arrived at that stage after passing through a variety of *prior* ones. In fact, whatever was the state in which it was created, it must have presented the same structure as if it had passed through *prior* ones. Even though it had been created as a bare *nucleus*, it must have done so; for the *nucleus* of the earth, so far as we are acquainted with it—even the most rude and unshapely piece of granite—presents in the crystallised form of its integral parts, as decisive marks of *prior* operations, as any thing else does.



The truth is—and it is chiefly, I acknowledge, for the sake of this truth that I have entered into the preceding induction of particulars,—in no department of the universe can we see either *the physical commencement or the physical termination* of nature's agency. Every order of creatures exhibits a *circle* of operations, so that, look where we may, or begin where we will, we find the most decisive symptoms of operations that seem *prior*. It would be foolish, indeed, to embrace the old doctrine—that, after certain intervals, all things return as before, so that *altera quæ vehat Argo delectos heroas, atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles*. The *cycles* of nature are of a different description ; but *cycles* of operations, nevertheless, there are ; and though, while some of them may not extend over a week—as the birth, growth, and reproduction of certain insects—others may extend over several years, as the birth, growth, and reproduction of human beings—and others over many centuries, as certain motions of the heavenly luminaries,—yet they are all of such a character, that, *begin where we will*, we find the most decisive marks of operations that seem *prior*. If we begin with the *egg*—to give a once celebrated example—we shall find the most decisive marks of its being produced from the *chicken* ; and if we begin with the *chicken*, we shall find no less decisive marks of its being produced from the *egg*. From this doctrine we may deduce the two following corollaries :

1. The notions of geologists respecting the high antiquity of the world are altogether visionary. Some of these gentlemen seem disposed to extend back the creation of the world to millions, or even to millions of millions of centuries, in order to have time for their different *formations*, and *stratifications*, and *vitrifications*, &c. But all this is the most childish foolery. Though they *went back to eternity*, they would be just as far from seeing the physical commencement of nature's works, as though they *went back but to yesterday*. They may tell us, indeed, that they discover in compact and deep-laid strata, the most decisive proofs of *prior* organization and life. We do not question the phenomena, but their conclusions from them ; and nothing can be more evident, than that, could *such reasoners* get into their hands the bodies of the *first* of mankind, as they have got that of the earth on which they dwelt, they would tell us, with equal assurance, that they discovered in them the most decisive proofs of their having been form-

ed in the womb in the ordinary way—of their having been nourished there by the ordinary means—of their having been born into the world at the ordinary time—and of their having passed through the ordinary stages of infancy, of childhood, and of youth, till at last they arrived at mature years. Every person, who admits of a creation at all, would admit this to be egregious folly, if intended to establish the actual existence of these operations; and the notions of geologists about the antiquity of the creation of the earth, as exhibited in its structure, are follies of the very same kind. The simple and rational doctrine is, that the earth and all its primitive productions and inhabitants, were created in a state of such maturity as suited their respective natures and conditions, and then set agoing in their different *cycles*, according to the laws which are at present in operation.\* With this doctrine we have a clear and determinate point to begin from, and are enabled to escape every physical difficulty of the smallest consequence; whilst, with every other, our minds are thrown entirely loose, we are left to begin at any point of nature's *cycles*, which fancy may suggest, and are exposed to physical difficulties, which no research or ingenuity can surmount. If we suppose, for example, that human beings were created as at mature age, and other things in a corresponding state, we encounter no physical difficulty whatever, in seeing how they might continue to live and propagate their kind, according to the existing laws of nature; but if we suppose them to have been created as at birth, the difficulties are innumerable.

2. Though the notions of geologists, respecting the antiquity of the world, are utterly visionary, yet they are at perfect liberty to trace the laws of nature—provided they can make any thing of the subject—by which the world *might* have arrived at its present state. The doctrine above suggested is, that every thing was created in the same condition, *as if* it had arrived at that condi-

\* The doctrine of physical Cycles is by no means *new*. On the contrary, it has existed in one form or another from time immemorial, and it seems to be one of the best established general doctrines in physical science. We see instances of it innumerable, both on the earth and in the heavens; and it overturns the notions of geologists, respecting the antiquity of the world, from their very foundations, as it leaves them not a particle of evidence to rest on; and would do so, I may add, although the phenomena they bring forward were ten thousand times more numerous than they actually are.



tion from *prior ones*, according to existing laws ;—that the bodies of Adam and Eve, for example, (and their minds too,) were created exactly *as if* they had been formed in the womb, *as if* they had been born at the ordinary time, and *as if* they had been reared to maturity in the ordinary way,—and that all other objects, and the earth among the rest, were created in a similar condition. So that, could we obtain possession of the *first* objects that were created, we should find in them as decisive symptoms of what seemed *prior operations*, as in any human, or animal, or vegetable subject that has grown up among ourselves. This doctrine is manifestly as favourable to the researches of geologists as their own. It does not condemn, in the smallest degree, their attempting to trace the progress of the earth through the various stages of formation through which, according to existing laws, it *might* have passed. All that it condemns is, their concluding that it has *actually* passed through these stages ; for the import of the doctrine is, that the earth and all its formations, if we make allowance for temporary and local convulsions, were created about the same time as the existing species of living creatures.

This doctrine, too, is clearly and completely agreeable to the records of inspiration ; and of course it frees geology from every feeling of dislike, which the friends of religion might otherwise entertain for it. The notion of the immense antiquity of the world is totally incompatible with the sacred writings. Its abettors may allege what they please ; but if their opinions be true, the Scriptures are a fable ; or, what amounts to the same thing, they are as dark as a riddle-book. The doctrine I have ventured to propose is exceedingly different. It accords so entirely with the Sacred Writings, *so far as it goes*, that it merely states the general principles, while they narrate the actual occurrences.\*

\* I may here remark, that if mankind at their creation possessed all the other endowments of mature life, there cannot be a doubt that they also possessed the faculty of *speaking some kind of language*. To suppose that in this alone they were deficient, seems very unreasonable, and contrary to all the analogies which the subject presents. There is no necessity, indeed, for supposing that they possessed a very copious language, any more than for supposing that, because they had been taught to *walk*, they had been also taught to *dance*. Neither is there any necessity for supposing that their language was learned by their hearing the words *formally pronounced*. Their education was no doubt more sum-

## Note L.

Many pious and enlightened divines seem willing to believe that the hereditary depravity of human nature does not imply any *positively bad* disposition originally communicated to us by the Author of our being, but merely the *want* or *deficiency* of such dispositions as are *positively good*. This doctrine, as I shall afterwards endeavour to show, is utterly contrary to the true theory of human nature, and shall only remark at present, that even although it were admitted, it would not enable us, as its advocates seem to imagine, to escape the main difficulty connected with the subject of hereditary depravity. For, if we be formed *without* those dispositions which are *requisite* to moral rectitude, how can we be justly blamed or justly punished for wanting that rectitude? This is just as great a difficulty as the common one connected with the supposition of *positively bad* dispositions.

Besides, although it should be allowed that we are not originally tainted with any *positively bad* disposition, yet beyond all question we *very soon acquire* them, and acquire them in consequence of the principles of our constitution operated on by the circumstances in which we are placed. Now where is the great difference between having bad dispositions *originally*, and the being formed with such constitutions, and placed in such circumstances, as will *indubitably give rise* to them. If bad dispositions are ever generated in our breasts by the agency of nature, the *precise time* of their formation—whether before we are born, or after we are born,—is a question, in as far as moral blame is concerned, of a very subordinate kind.

Let not moralists trifle with the difficulties of their subject. It is not the distinction between *positively good* and *positively bad*

many, and merely consisted in their being enabled to do *at once* what others must learn by time and experience. In other words, without learning any language, they could speak and understand one *as if* they had learned it.

Philosophers, it is well known, have applied their ingenuity to account for the formation of language, as well as for the formation of the world; and in both cases, their ingenuity, if designed to establish actual occurrences, is thoroughly childish and nonsensical.



dispositions that will at all avail them; nor am I aware of any doctrine that will much avail, except that mentioned in the text—that our dispositions in themselves are merely *physical principles*, that we have nevertheless some power, in consequence of volition, to control them, and consequently that we are blamable if we do not exercise a *right* control. This doctrine entirely accords with all the general principles of mental philosophy, and it cuts up the difficulty connected with bad dispositions, communicated by the Author of our being, by the very roots.

Note M.

Perhaps the different meanings annexed to the words *impossible*, *must*, &c. in the cases referred to in the text, is more apparent than real. When we say, that it is *impossible* for us to give an unreasonable price for such an article, we may mean, that as we shall certainly give only a reasonable price, it would imply an *inconsistency* with our being to give also an unreasonable one: and when we say to a person informing us of his having seen such a friend in Perth yesterday, that he *must* be mistaken, the same may be our meaning—that as our friend was certainly the whole of yesterday in Edinburgh, it would imply an inconsistency with the being of our informant to have seen him in Perth.

The truth is, that in every case where we use such expressions, there are certain tacit or explicit references made by the mind; and according as these references vary, the meaning of the expressions must also *seem* to vary, although it really continues exactly the same. When we say, for example, that it is *impossible* for an eagle to fly to the moon, there is evidently a tacit reference to the fact, that the constitution of nature will remain as it is; for were the constitution of nature sufficiently changed, an eagle might easily fly to the moon. When we say, that it is impossible for a child of the ordinary faculties to be brought up in England without speaking English, there is no less evidently a tacit reference to the fact, that though speaking be a free and voluntary action, yet the child will act according to the circumstances in which it is placed; for were it to act otherwise, instead of speaking English, it might decline speaking altogether. The references

of the mind, in these cases, are considerably different, and give to the meaning of the word *impossible* an *appearance* of difference, though, in all probability, there really is none. Let us take another example :

A person tells us, that it is *impossible* for him to ride to town to-day ; and in using such language, he may either refer to his not having sufficient strength to ride to town, or to his horse's not having sufficient strength, or to his having no horse at all, and being without the means of procuring one, or to the road's being blocked up with snow, and altogether impassable by a horse, or to his being engaged in some particular business which he certainly will not neglect. But should we be warranted to say, that in each of these cases the word *impossible* has a different meaning? Is it not rather the tacit references of the mind that differ, and that create an *apparent* diversity in the meaning of the word when there is none in reality?

Nor is it merely in such cases as the preceding that the tacit references of the mind occasion an *apparent* diversity in the meaning of words. Mr Locke has shown that they do so in cases innumerable. The words *old* and *young*, for example, have certainly a very definite meaning ; and yet, as Locke well remarks, in consequence of the tacit references of the mind, a man would be called *young* at *twenty years*, and *very young* at *seven*, while a horse would be called *old* at *twenty years* and a dog *old* at *seven*.

The following observations may be of some use to guide us in the application of such terms as *power*, *must*, *impossible*, &c.

1. Due allowance should be made for the different mental references that may take place in the course of the *same process of reasoning*. It is a maxim in Logic, that if our principles be just, and our reasoning from them also just, the conclusion we arrive at must likewise be just : and this, I admit, is a sound logical maxim. It is one, however, which must be applied to morals with much caution, else, under the semblance of great logical accuracy, it may involve us in not a few egregious absurdities. It will be admitted, for example, by every one, that no action is morally wrong which the agent is *unable* to avoid—that what a person *cannot* omit doing he is not blamable for doing. But were an individual to argue from this principle as follows :—No action is morally wrong which the agent is *unable* to avoid ; therefore every



moral agent must be *able* to avoid every morally wrong action ; therefore such an agent as man must be *able* to avoid moral wrong *altogether*, and live in a state of *absolute perfection*—he would arrive at a conclusion against which the common sense of mankind would instantly rebel.

The reason is, the propositions which form his reasoning give rise to very different mental references, and due allowance not being made for these references, his conclusion not only strikes every one as erroneous, but so thoroughly erroneous as to be altogether ridiculous.

The converse of the above may be taken as another example. Were an individual to argue as follows :—Mankind are *unable* to avoid moral wrong and live in a state of perfection ; moral agents, therefore, may be guilty of moral wrong which they are *unable* to avoid, and consequently actions may be morally wrong which *cannot* be avoided—he would argue as logically as in the former case, and yet he would arrive at a conclusion which no one would admit. The reason is precisely as already stated. The propositions which form his reasoning give rise to very different mental references, and due allowance not being made for them, his conclusion strikes every one as a complete absurdity.

It is a doctrine both of natural and revealed religion, that “all things are of God,” and from this it seems necessarily to follow, that sin must be of God. Such a conclusion, however, no one would admit, and the reason is precisely the same as in the two preceding examples. Though it seems to follow very justly from the principle it is deduced from, yet it makes no allowance for the different set of mental references to which it gives rise.

The compilers of the Westminster Shorter Catechism assert, that “God hath from all eternity foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” And from this it has been argued, that, according to these divines, God must from all eternity have foreordained the commission of every sin that comes to pass. Such a conclusion, however, is altogether unfair. And for the reason already mentioned—it makes no allowance for any difference of mental reference.

2. Due allowance should be made for *different states of the mind* in different circumstances. The very same assertion may be exceedingly proper while the mind is in one state, and yet be exceedingly improper while the mind is in another. Were a per-

son, for example, while speaking of the Almighty, to remark, that "of him, and through him, and to him are all things," he would certainly occasion no mistake. But were he, while speaking of the perpetration of some atrocious crime, to make the same observation, he might occasion a mistake the most serious; for he might be thought to impute the crime itself to the Almighty. The reason is, the mind is in very different states on these occasions, and apt to give way to very different references. To take another example:

Were a person, while speaking on the subject of volition, to assert that our voluntary actions are *all* of such a nature, that we may either *do* or *omit* doing them, he would undoubtedly utter a very just assertion. But how should we regard the person who should assert, that even when the *Divine purposes and foreknowledge* refer to our voluntary actions, we may either *do* or *omit* doing them, and consequently either fulfil or *defeat* the Divine purposes and foreknowledge? The reason is precisely the same as already mentioned. The mind, on these occasions, is placed in totally different states, and is apt to give way to totally different references.

3. I may mention as a third observation, that we should avoid as much as possible the appropriate phraseology of particular *sects* or *parties*. Mankind have always been much divided on the important subjects of religion and morals, and each party has a style of speaking, in some measure peculiar to itself. The consequence is, that if we be not on our guard against such peculiarities, we may announce the most accurate and useful truths, and yet be thought by all but our own party to propound the most pernicious or extravagant errors. The fact is, that not a few authors, who seem most widely to differ from each other, would find, to their astonishment, that they cordially agree, were their writings translated into each other's language.

It is much to be regretted, that both writers and speakers are in general so little attentive to the principles that should regulate their nomenclature, respecting morality and religion. From the want of such attention, they often incur the imputation of ignorance or extravagance, when otherwise they might be regarded with very high respect. I have sometimes had occasion to hear very worthy and venerable men express the most valuable doctrines, in such a way as to make every intelligent person uniniti-



ated in the mysteries of their vocabulary, imagine they were uttering the greatest fooleries.

In the employment of figurative language, it is well known, that if due attention be not paid to circumstances, the most sublime expressions may become absolutely ludicrous. The expressions we are at present considering, though not figurative, demand equal attention to circumstances; and those who are unable or unwilling to pay this attention, need not be surprised, though, while they suppose themselves to be arguing and discoursing with great logical accuracy, other people regard their whole exertations as mere nonsense.

The most perfect skill in dialectics, it should ever be remembered, will not make a moralist, and that a man may argue most logically, and yet, if he attend not to circumstances, may only argue himself into conclusions that will justly excite derision.

#### Note N.

It is usually said by the advocates of Contingence, that though *man* cannot *foresee* voluntary actions, yet *God* may do so, and that our ignorance of the manner of his foresight, is no argument against its existence. This is so far just. But is it true, in point of fact, that man cannot *foresee* voluntary actions? On the contrary, is it not perfectly manifest, that, in many cases, we can just as easily foresee voluntary actions as those that are physical? There are at present, for example, in Britain, upwards of ten millions of inhabitants past the years of infancy, and I believe with as much assurance that each of them, on an average, will, in the course of to-morrow, speak at least ten English words—though speaking is a voluntary action—as I believe that the sun will rise above the horizon; and that when he does so, he will give light to the world. Here there are at least an hundred millions of voluntary actions very clearly foreseen. Nor is it merely such general actions as these that we can foresee. We can just as easily foresee others the most precise and specific. I foresee, for example, with perfect assurance, that when my friends rise out of bed to-morrow morning, they will put on their stockings and shoes, &c., and not go out to the street without these habiliments;

and I foresee with equal assurance, that when they go to bed to-morrow evening, they will put off their stockings and shoes, &c., and not lie down attired in these habiliments. The truth, beyond all dispute, is, that we foresee voluntary actions on the very same principles as we foresee other kinds of actions. The rules of evidence apply to both, and apply to both alike; and according to our acquaintance, with circumstances, enable us to regard some of them as *certain*, some of them as *probable*, and some of them as *doubtful*.

It is curious to remark the strong hold which the doctrine of Contingence has taken of the minds of philosophers. For a long period, many mere physical events were believed by them to proceed from *chance*. Even the world itself was supposed by some of them to come from this source—from a fortuitous concourse of atoms. This doctrine, in reference to physics, is now entirely given up by them. But in reference to volition or choice, it is maintained by many as strenuously as ever; and that, too, in spite of principles which the greater part of mankind regard as indisputable. The great mass of mankind are perfectly convinced, that *choice* implies *design*, and that *design* is the very principle to which *chance* is most directly and most palpably opposed. The great mass of mankind are also convinced, that choice is the foundation of all morality and religion, and that it would be in the highest degree absurd to suppose that a man acts either morally or religiously, who acts from *chance*—who acts *at random*—yet, strange to tell, a large class of philosophers, and, what is still more wonderful, a large class of divines also, most confidently maintain, that chance is the very *source* of choice; and consequently is the very source from which all design, and all morality, and all religion, must spring.

I cannot, however, doubt that the time will come when a very different doctrine will obtain,—when, as the objects which form one of the large divisions of nature are acknowledged to be *acted upon*, according to the circumstances in which they are placed; those which form the other, will be acknowledged to *act themselves* according to the circumstances in which they are placed. When this period comes, the doctrine of chance will be entirely banished from philosophy, and a regular system of government be allowed to exist throughout the whole universe.



## Note O.

"The term sympathy," says Sir Gilbert Blane, in his *Elements of Medical Logic*, "has been much objected to; but, as I apprehend, rather fastidiously and unreasonably. It is, like most other terms belonging to the science of life, figurative, being a metaphor taken from an affection of the mind. The import of words, according to the most correct and received rules of philosophy and rhetoric, is not at all to be deduced from etymology, but either to be assumed conventionally, according to a definition, or to be adhered to in the sense affixed to it by established usage. By animal sympathy, is not meant the intelligent principle of Stahl's hypothesis, but that mutual influence of distant parts, so subtle and rapid as in some instances to be compared to thought or to lightning; in other instances, it is an action more tardy and habitual. If this term is to be rejected, some other must be invented to express what actually takes place in those operations of the living body, by which, without the transmission of ponderable matter, or the intervention of any of its properties, the most indispensable functions are carried on in health; and some of the most striking phenomena of diseases, such as their translation and conversion, can no otherwise be explained. The medium of this communication is probably some imponderable fluid; but it would here be out of place to discuss this, since we have only to do with a fact referable to an ultimate and inexplicable law of life.

"It is through this energy, that all the preceding faculties act and react upon each other, in carrying on that harmonious play of the animal system, in which its sound state, and its perfection as a whole, consists. The most descriptive character of the healthy state being the quietness and imperceptibleness of the operation of the various functions and organs, this intercourse by sympathy is but little observable in health, and is only manifested in morbid actions, or in the operation of medicines. Every such action must, therefore, carry a reference to a corresponding action, or previously existing habitude in the healthy state. The connexion of the stomach with the head, the heart, the surface of the body, and the kidneys, and the reciprocal action of all the functions and or-

gans with the skin, may be adduced as some of the most striking and important examples of sympathy.

“ Sympathy seems, in general, to be carried on by the instrumentality of the nerves; but to this there are important exceptions. The species of sympathy, called by Mr Hunter the *contiguons*, takes place not only in the relations of mere proximity and continuity, but by the influence of the containing on the contained parts, as that of the integuments on the subjacent *viscera*, in none of which does there seem to be any reference to the distribution of nerves. This may be exemplified by the relief afforded to the lungs and intestines, by bleeding, blistering, or fomenting the nearest external surface. We find in some old anatomical books, an attempt to trace sympathies to the ramifications proceeding from the common trunk of a nerve; but better observation has proved, that sympathies have little or no dependence on the connexion and distribution of nerves.

“ There are also evident indications of sympathy in vegetable life; for, not to mention the effect of the irritation of a single leaflet of the sensitive plant, in making the whole leaf and its footstalk contract, there is undeniable proof of it in the excitement of the roots of trees, in sending up the sap in consequence of an influence from the trunk, branches, and leaves, on the return of the vernal warmth. \* \* \* \* If, in the winter time, the branch of a vine be introduced into a hot-house, it will produce a luxuriant crop of leaves, blossoms, and fruit, the materials of which could only be derived from the excitement of the roots propagated by sympathy with the parts in contact with warm air. This will take place even during a frost, in which situation, these roots would have been in a torpid state, had it not been for the sympathetic influence of the parts above ground, brought into action by warmth. The action of the roots, therefore, must be excited from what Mr Knight, in treating on the same subject, calls ‘ a vehicle of irritation, arising from an intense power of producing motion in vegetable life.’

“ It is evident how much processes of health must be deranged from an excess, defect, or total suppression of the sympathetic faculty; and this opens a wide scope to the speculation of those who search deeply into the proximate causes of disease, the oper-



ation of remedies, and the sources of error from the false reference of the seat of disorders.

“ ‘There exist,’ says Richerand, ‘among all the parts of the living body, intimate relations; all correspond to each other, and carry on a reciprocal intercourse of sensations and affections. These links, which unite together all the organs, by establishing a wonderful concurrence, and a perfect harmony among all the actions that take place in the animal economy, are known under the name of *sympathies*. The nature (cause) of this phenomenon is yet unknown; we know not why, when a part is irritated, another very distant part partakes in that irritation, or even contracts; we do not even understand what are the instruments of sympathy, that is, what are the organs which connect two parts in such a manner, that when one feels or acts, the other is affected. But though beyond explanation, sympathy is not the less important in the economy of living beings; and these connexions between remote parts, constitute one of the most remarkable differences between those beings and inorganic bodies. Nothing similar is observable in dead or inanimate nature, in which all things are connected together, only by palpable and material links; here the chain is invisible, the connexion evident, the cause occult, and the effect apparent.’

“ Whitt has clearly shown, that the nerves cannot be considered as the exclusive instruments of sympathy, since several muscles of a limb, which receive filaments from the same nerve, do not sympathize together, while there may be a close and manifest relation between two parts, of which the nerves have no immediate connexion, since each nervous filament having one of its extremities terminating in the brain, the other in the part to which it is sent, remains distinct from those of the same trunk, and does not communicate with them.

“ Sympathies may be distinguished into different kinds. In the first place, two organs, which execute similar functions;—the kidneys may supply each other’s office. When the *uterus* is in a state of pregnancy, the breasts participate in its condition, and there is determined into them a flow of humours necessary to the secretion which is to take place. Secondly, the continuity of membranes is a powerful source of sympathy. The presence of worms in the bowels determines an uneasy pruritus around the nostrils.

When there is a stone in the bladder, a certain degree of itching is felt at the extremity of the glands. The secretion of several fluids is determined in the same manner: Thus, the presence of food in the mouth brings at the extremity of the parotid duct, an irritation, which extends to the parotid glands, calls them into action, and increases their secretion. Thirdly, If the pituitary membrane is irritated, the diaphragm, with which it has no immediate organic connexion, nervous, vascular, or membranous, contracts, and occasions sneezing. Is not this sympathy one of those which Haller ascribed to a reaction of the *sensorium commune*? If the impression produced on the olfactory nerves by snuff is too powerful, the uneasy sensation is transmitted to the brain, which determines towards the diaphragm a quantity of the principle of motion sufficient to enable that membrane suddenly to contract the dimensions of the chest, so as to dispel a column of air, that may detach from the pituitary membrane the substances that are a cause of uneasiness to it. Fourthly, Does not the principle of life seem to control at pleasure the phenomena of sympathy? The rectum, when irritated by the presence of the excrements, contracts: What cause determines the accessory and simultaneous action of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles? Does this connexion depend on organic communications? Why, then, is not the sympathy reciprocal, and why does not the rectum contract, when the diaphragm is irritated? Fifthly, Can the repeated habit of the same motions explain the harmony which is observed in the symmetrical organs? Why, when our sight is directed to an object, placed laterally, does the rectus externus of the eye on that side, act at the same time as the rectus internus of the other eye? The indispensable utility of this phenomenon, in keeping a parallelism of the axis of vision, is very obvious; but who can assign the cause? Why are rotatory motions, in different directions, performed with so much difficulty by the arm and leg of the same side of the body? Can it be called a just idea of the innumerable varieties of this phenomenon, and of its frequent anomalies, to say, with Rega, that they are sympathies of *action* or of *contractibility* (*consensus actionum*) sympathies of sensibility (*consensus passionum*.)" \* \* \* \* \*

"It is by means of sympathy that all the organs concur in the same end, and yield each other mutual assistance. It affords us



the means of explaining how an affection, at first local or limited in its extent, spreads and extends to all the system ; it is thus that every morbid process is carried on. The diseases termed general always originate through the medium of association, (sympathy,) in the insulated affection of an organ or a system of organs.

" In fact, the affections which appear to us most complex, in the number, the variety, and the dissimilarity of their symptoms, consist of only one, or of a small number of primitive or essential elements ; all the rest are accessory, and depend on numerous sympathies of the affected organ, with the other organs of the animal economy. Thus, if the stomach is the seat of irritation, from foulness of its contents, pains of all kinds come on, but especially in the head and limbs, with a burning heat, nausea, loss of appetite, anxiety ; and these symptoms constitute a disease, which appears to affect the whole system.

" To go on with the same illustration, the stomach, when oppressed by irritating substances, contracts spontaneously to get rid of them. The universal disturbance which their presence occasions, seems directed towards the same end, as if the suffering organ called upon all the others to assist in relieving it.

" These *Synérgeries*, or aggregate motions, tending to one end, and arising out of the laws of sympathy, constitute the diseases termed general, as well as the greater part of those which are called local. It is by means of them, and through these kinds of organic insurrections, if we may be permitted to use that expression, which perfectly expresses our meaning, that nature struggles with advantage, and rids herself of the morbid principle, or of the cause of the disease ; and the art of exciting and directing these actions furnishes the materials of the most important doctrines of the practice of medicine. I have used the terms excite and direct ; for it is necessary at times to increase, at others to diminish, their intensity and force, and on some occasions to excite them, when nature, overwhelmed under disease, is almost incapable of reaction. This last circumstance belongs to diseases of the most dangerous kind, if we include those in which the efforts of nature, though marked by a certain degree of energy, are without connexion, or consent, and frustrated by their want of coherence." \* \* \* \*

" A knowledge of sympathies is of the highest importance in

the practice of medicine. When we wish to avert an irritation fixed in a diseased organ, experience and observation prove, that it is on the organ which bears to it the closest sympathetic connexions, that it is useful to apply medicines intended to excite counter irritations."

Note P.

There is hardly any part of the body more nervous and sensitive than the parts above the upper orifice of the stomach, nor any part in which sensations are more habitually felt. Some philosophers have even fixed the seat of the soul in this quarter; and many expressions, in common language, seem to give the sanction of popular opinion to their doctrine. It is a quarter, too, in a very high degree *sympathetic*. Indeed, no part of the body appears to be more so. It is hardly possible for any part of the body to be affected without the affections being communicated by *sympathy* to the parts about the upper orifice of the stomach.

Note Q.

It sometimes happens that very pious people, under the infirmities of age, complain that they have few of those religious emotions that were wont to cheer them. Are we to conclude that their religion has decayed or abandoned them? Beyond all question, if religion consist in emotions, this would be a legitimate conclusion. But if the doctrine of the text be just—that emotions proceed directly from the body—we have no more reason to infer the decay or annihilation of religion from the loss of emotions, than from the loss of sight, or smell, or hearing.

Nor will it follow that emotions are not to be employed in religion, or that they are of little or no religious utility. Seeing and hearing proceed directly from the influence of the body; but would any one assert that they are not to be employed in religion, or that they are of little or no religious utility? The doctrine I have stated leads to the conclusion, that emotions *ought* to be employed in religion; that when *properly regulated*, they are of high



religious utility; but that it is *only* when properly regulated, they are of any religious utility at all; for that in themselves they are mere sensations, and much dependent, of course, on the bodily temperament and condition. Of the truth of this remark, any one may judge, not only from the different aspects presented by religious emotions, according to constitutional feeling, but from the still more obvious fact, that many are never more ready to speak with much religious fervour than when half drunk.

#### Note R.

The nature of *belief*, and its relation to the other principles of our constitution, I shall have occasion to examine at some length in the *Second Part* of my Disquisitions. In the meantime, I remark, that in the general sense of the word *action*, belief is really a species of action, as much as any other operation whatever—as much, for instance, as thinking, or speaking, or even as walking, or running, or leaping. A distinction, indeed, is frequently made between *believing* and *acting*, just as a distinction is frequently made between *thinking* and *acting*, or between *speaking* and *acting*, and such distinctions in common language are exceedingly convenient; but surely no person supposes that the word *action*, in its more general meaning, does not include all these operations?

Volition, too, has power to control *belief*, as well as to control actions. This opinion, as I have mentioned, has been maintained by very eminent philosophers; and it is the only opinion, I am persuaded, that is at all admissible. In fact, as I shall afterwards endeavour to show, volition exerts a more immediate control over belief, than over actions.

The circumstances also, which direct volition in controlling belief, are in many respects analogous to those which direct it in controlling actions. *Motives*—or the circumstances which direct volition in controlling actions—are well known to be sometimes simple, sometimes complex, sometimes harmonious, and sometimes conflicting; and the very same is the case with *evidence*—or the circumstances which direct volition in controlling belief. It, too, as is well known, is sometimes simple, sometimes complex, sometimes harmonious, and sometimes conflicting.

I may add, that we are likewise as *responsible* for the regulation of belief, as for the regulation of actions. This is a necessary consequence of its being subject to the control of volition, for whatever is controlled by this principle, is matter of responsibility. The truth, indeed, as already stated, is, that belief is merely a species of action; and we are just as much bound to believe aright as to act aright. The Author of our being has given us laws for our guidance in both cases; and in both cases we are blameable if we do not obey these laws.

The responsibility of man for his belief has of late obtained some share of public attention; but every writer I have happened to fall in with seems strangely averse to place the question on its plain and simple basis. A respectable writer,—Dr Wardlaw,—in endeavouring to elucidate the subject, remarks, that he is far from questioning the truth of the axiom, “that belief must necessarily correspond with the perception of evidence, it being in the nature of the thing impossible that the mind should believe, or disbelieve, otherwise than evidence is, or is not discerned.” “This axiom,” he adds, “is quite entitled to the designation, being a self-evident and indisputable truth.”

In spite, however, of the general prevalence of the axiom, I cannot but regard it as almost a self-evident and indisputable error. No evidence, for example, can be stronger against a doctrine than that which reduces it to a direct contradiction; and yet I appeal to common experience, if we do not every day fall in with people whose opinions we could show to themselves to involve the most complete contradictions; but who, nevertheless, continue to believe them as firmly as ever,—to believe them from the mere *habit of believing*, without any evidence (in the common sense of the term) whatsoever.

It is no doubt true, as every one must have observed, that people do not *wish* to see evidence in opposition to sentiments they mean to abide by, and that they are rather disposed to shut their eyes to the light, than believe in contradiction to it; but this only discovers another analogy between *believing* and *acting*. People do not *wish* to see evidence in opposition to conduct they mean to abide by, and are rather disposed to shut their eyes to the light than *act* in contradiction to it.



Dr Wardlaw also mentions, that belief is much affected by the dispositions of the heart, and every one must allow that it actually is so. But, beyond all question, belief is not *more* affected by the dispositions of the heart, than the dispositions of the heart are affected by belief. In reality, belief has obviously the *prior* influence; for no man can have a disposition of heart towards any thing, unless he has previously had some belief concerning it.

I may, perhaps, incur the charge of temerity in venturing to contest with Dr Wardlaw the import of Scripture; but I beg to remark, nevertheless, that the Sacred Writings, at least, *seem* to impute blame to wrong belief on its *own account*, and not merely on account of the dispositions of the heart. Again and again do they speak of the sin of *unbelief*, in the same way as they speak of other sins; and again and again do they warn us of the danger of *unbelief*, in the same way as they warn us of the danger of other sins: Or, if they make any difference, they rather seem to give the evil of unbelief the *priority*. And, I confess, I cannot but regard that philosophy as more agreeable to Scripture which *directly* condemns wrong belief on its *own account*, than that which takes the circuitous course of condemning it only on account of the state of the heart with which it is connected. The truth certainly is, that both these parts of our frame *act* and *react* on each other, and that both are *directly* reprehensible, in so far as they are not guided by the laws which the Author of Nature has appointed for their regulation. Were not every branch of mental science, at present, in the most unsatisfactory state, I cannot doubt that these sentiments would obtain immediate and universal admission. The supposition, indeed, that we are not as directly bound to *believe aright* as to *act aright*—to attend to the management of our *convictions* as to the management of our *dispositions*—must strike an ordinary mind as having a very startling tendency, and not very obviously reconcilable either with reason or revelation.

THE END.

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